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CHRISTIAN HISTORY

WOMEN IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

In a fascinating and forgotten age, women shook their church and their world.

BONUS SECTION
The Faith Behind
ISAAC
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Did You Know?

JEANNETTE L. ANGELL

Little-known facts about women in the medieval church

The first autobiography in the English language was written by a Christian woman, Margery Kempe, who lived in the early 1400s.

In the early Middle Ages, it was not uncommon for an abbess (the female head of a religious community) to rule "double" communities of both men and women. One who did so was Hilda of Whitby (614–80), whose abbey became famous for its learning and libraries. Five future bishops were trained in her community, and kings and rulers sought her advice.

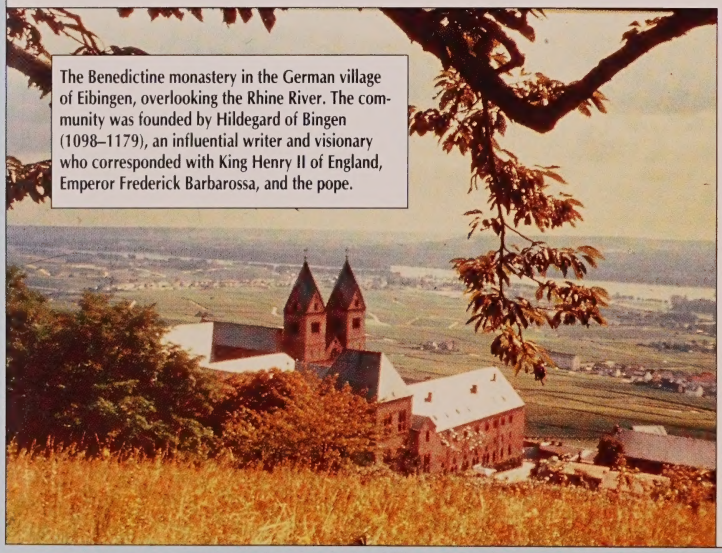
Many women joined the Crusades. They began to be required to gain their husbands' consent before leaving.

Christian women often corresponded with—and gave advice to—the most prominent leaders of their day. Heloise (better known for her relationship with famous philosopher Peter Abelard) maintained a significant exchange with Peter the Venerable, the influential abbot of Cluny. The two discussed theology and spirituality at length. Anselm, later archbishop of Canterbury (1093–1109), corresponded with Queen Matilda on matters of religion.

Of all the recognized saints between 500 and 1200, about 15 percent were women.

Some Anglo-Saxon queens appointed bishops. Queen Emma of Normandy, one of the most powerful people in England in the early eleventh century, clearly did so. So did Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor, the English king who built Westminster Abbey.

Brigid of Ireland was said to have been consecrated a bishop. Brigid, who was born in the late 400s, founded the first nunnery in Ireland and served as an abbess. According to one account, Bishop Mel conferred the episcopal order upon the abbess, even though she had requested only the order of repentance; "and hence Brigid's successor is always entitled to have episcopal orders and the honour due a bishop."



The Benedictine monastery in the German village of Eibingen, overlooking the Rhine River. The community was founded by Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), an influential writer and visionary who corresponded with King Henry II of England, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, and the pope.

Otto Müller Verlag

Boniface, the great missionary known as "the apostle to the Germans," specifically requested that women be sent to aid him in converting the pagan Saxons. One of the approximately thirty women who went was Lioba, who became so widely respected that she was invited by Charlemagne's queen to visit the royal court.

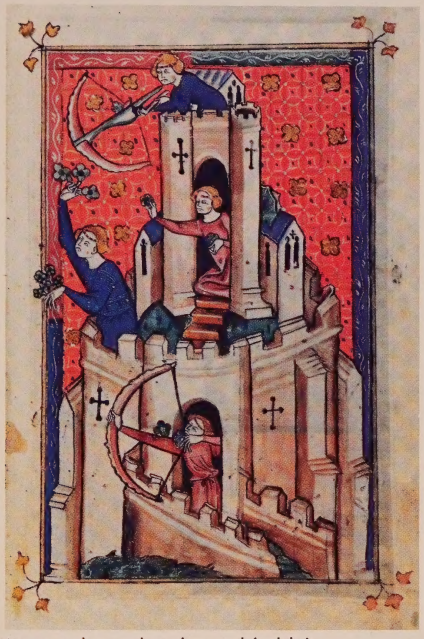
Hrotsvit, a German Christian woman who lived in the tenth century, wrote verse, history, and, in fact, the only dramas composed in all of Europe from the fourth to the eleventh centuries. (Hrotsvit is a pen name she assumed—it means "loud voice!")

The first English book known to be written by a woman was written by a Christian, the influential writer and visionary Julian of Norwich.

Joan of Arc's father ordered her brothers to drown her as a young girl. Only their failure to do so allowed her to grow up, and at age 17 save France from military destruction. Mark Twain, after twelve years of research on Joan's life, concluded that her life was "the most noble life that was ever born into this world save only One."

Almost all European Christians, from the mid-thirteenth century on, believed there had been a woman pope. Pope "Joan," disguised as a man and known as Pope John, was said to have begun her reign in 855 (other versions said 1100). Her alleged reign—for almost three years—ended when she gave birth while riding in procession. The story was so widely held that a bust of Pope Joan was placed in Siena cathedral in about 1400, and John Hus spoke of her while on trial shortly before his death. Not until the mid-1500s was the story repudiated.

The Waldensians, a group beginning in the twelfth century that has been



The Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford, ms. 92, f. 4r

Women use bows and crossbows to defend their castle. In the early Middle Ages, invading Avars, Danes, Normans, and other hordes "cut the throats of both young and old who came in their way and shamefully entreated holy matrons and virgins." In such an age, religious women often performed heroic deeds, as one abbess put it, to "escape the rage of the barbarians and preserve our chastity."

described as "Protestants before the Reformation," were charged with allowing women to preach.

In the later Middle Ages, some Christian women chose lives of prayer and solitary confinement in their pursuit of holiness. These *anchoresses,* as they were known, often lived in a small room attached to a church. Windows allowed them to look into the sanctuary, to view the services there, and to look out into the village, to be able to buy food and necessary supplies.

The first known morality play, an important form of drama in the late medieval period, was written by a woman—Hildegard of Bingen, the twelfth-century German abbess.

Holy women so valued their virginity that in some extreme cases they cut or disfigured themselves so they would not be molested by marauding invaders of their monasteries. One who did so was Ebba the Younger, abbess of a remote monastery in Scotland during the wave of Danish invasions in the late ninth century.

Fara, a saint in the late 600s, founded a joint community of men and women in the north of France, where she ruled as abbess and assumed priestly and episcopal powers, hearing confessions and excommunicating members. Abbesses continued to hold considerable authority; as late as the thirteenth century, certain abbesses had to be halted from hearing confessions of their nuns.

Anna Comnena, daughter of Byzantine emperor Alexius I, wrote the most detailed history of the church of her time.

Women made extensive pilgrimages—often with small retinues—to the Holy Land. One such pilgrim was Margery Kempe, who traveled (without her husband) first in England and then to Rome and Jerusalem.

Women played a role in helping to end the "Babylonian Captivity" of the church, the nearly-70-year period in which the papacy was exiled at Avignon, France, in the shadow of French royal power. Birgitta (or Bridget) of Sweden strongly urged Pope Clement VI to return the papal see to Rome. Later, Catherine of Siena spent three months in Avignon and successfully persuaded Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome.

Eleanor of Aquitaine (the twelfth-century queen of England and France, and generous supporter of Fontrevault Abbey) wore the color of mourning—white—to her wedding. She thus set a precedent for brides in all centuries since. □

Jeannette L. Angell is a doctoral candidate in history and liturgics at the School of Theology, Boston University.

British Library, ms. Dom. A XVII, f. 73v

A choir of nuns from the Poor Clares order, as shown in a Book of Psalms from the 1400s. The Poor Clares were founded between 1212 and 1214 by Clare of Assisi and her famous colleague Saint Francis. For more on Clare's austere and holy Christian life, see page 22.

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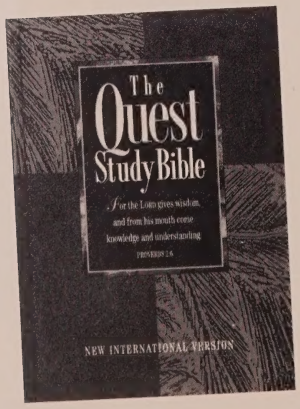

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British Library, ms.ROY.15DI, f.18

A wife stirs a pot of medicine or food for her ailing husband. In the Middle Ages, a woman's daily life often intersected the church. See page 16.

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©1991 CHRISTIAN HISTORY. **COVER:** Medieval illustration of the officers of a nunnery. In the top row, at right, chaplains preside; behind them is the sacristan, pulling the bell rope. Next is the abbess with her crosier, and the cellaress (the person responsible for the community's food and supplies) with her keys. Courtesy of the British Library, MS Add.39843, f.6v.

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From the Editor

In the Middle (Ages) of a Debate

Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris

In this fifteenth-century illustration, a female teacher instructs a man and two children.

Three years ago, *Christian History* published an issue devoted to women in the early church. That issue received more responses than almost any other issue in our history.

Some readers praised us for our open-mindedness. Others chastised us for our narrow-mindedness. No one seemed neutral. Gulp.

Such has been the case for two thousand years of church history. Early-church father Tertullian called women "the Devil's gateway . . . the first forsaker of the divine law. . . ." On the other hand, Jerome, another pillar of the early centuries, wrote: "Is it not to women that our Lord appeared after His Resurrection? Yes, and the men could then blush for not having sought what the women had found."

In our own day, despite countless books, conferences, and theological debates, the role of women in the church is far from settled. Even in denominations that have taken a firm position, individual churches and women (and men) continue to wrestle with female ministry.

We hope to offer in this issue a neglected aspect of the debate: the role of women in the church during the medieval period (especially in Europe in the high Middle Ages). Please let us know what you think of these issues. Your opinions will help us to decide how, or whether, to continue the series.

The medieval era is surely one of the most difficult for us to understand. People danced around the Maypole, and built soaring cathedrals. They walked thousands of miles to view holy relics, and lit bonfires to ward off dragons. They illuminated some of the most beautiful books ever made, and fought plagues by carrying bouquets of flowers. They bathed in barrels, and saw visions of angels. And—impossible for us to understand—a massive Christendom ruled over all: kings and queens, abbots and abbesses, and countless peasant women and men.

Because the cultural differences are so great, it's easy for us to question the faith of these believers 700 years (or more) ago. We like things rational and orderly, so their emphasis on mystical visions perplexes us. We emphasize the individual, so their stress on communal life makes us blink. We live in an age of The Playboy Channel, so their radical commitment to virginity strikes us as quaint.

Certainly not everything in the medieval church could or should be imitated. But before we dismiss the practices of these saints as misguided, we need to consider: Will Christians in the year 2690 see *us* as true believers?

Coming in the Next Issue: *Christian History* will publish its first issue on the powerful and important role of music in the history of the church. The "Golden Age of Hymns" focuses on the great hymnwriters Isaac Watts ("Joy to the World"), Charles Wesley ("O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"), John Newton ("Amazing Grace"), and many others. You'll enjoy learning how and why they wrote the hymns we still sing today.

KEVIN A. MILLER

P.S. Many of you have asked when we plan to publish an issue devoted to Martin Luther. We surely have not forgotten this giant of the Reformation, of church history, and of all history, secular or sacred. We are hard at work on a special, expanded issue and will release it next year.

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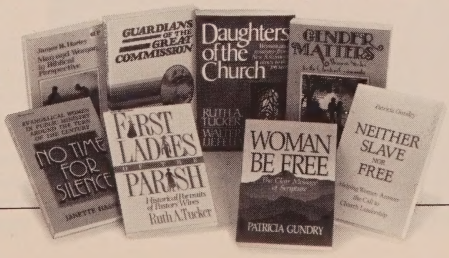

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Catherine of Siena

She lived only 33 years, but her vibrant faith and writings were so influential she has been declared a Doctor of the Church.

CAROLINE T. MARSHALL

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Catherine of Siena lived her remarkable Christian life during the chaos and violence of the fourteenth century. While the medieval order was dying, she labored for peace, reform, and the renewal of the human spirit.

Following Christ's instruction, Catherine believed it was her duty to reform the church, to evangelize, and to comfort the sick, poor, and condemned. She was an activist in an age when a woman's religious vocation was supposed to be confined and apart from the world. Warmed by divine love from her intimate experience of God, Catherine proclaimed a personal faith in Jesus Christ that touches contemporary Christians with its conviction and immediacy.

Youthful devotion

She was born Caterina di Icopo di Benincasa in the spring of 1347. Her home in Tuscany was torn by civil and ecclesiastical conflict. The great Italian city-states, including Catherine's own Siena, were making an uneasy transition from feudal society and economy to early modern republicanism and commercial capitalism. Catherine and her generation of Italians endured frequent wars and threats of invasion.

Catherine's birth into a middle-class wool dyer's family caused scarcely a ripple; she was the twenty-fourth of twenty-five children. While still a small girl, about 7, Catherine was touched by the extraordinary movement of the Holy Spirit in her community and saw a vision of Jesus with Peter, Paul, and John the evangelist. She announced her determination to live some sort of special religious life. Alarmed, her father Jacobo and mother Lupa tried to divert her into the customary preparation for marriage and children. In spite of coercion and punishment, during which she was forced to act as a maid in her parents' house, she remained

Catherine of Siena (1347–1380), one of the most famous women in the medieval church. She evangelized many prisoners. One was violent, but Catherine regularly visited him, and he began to change. She stayed with him to the end: "I was there at the place of execution, waiting and praying. . . . I bent over him and held him as he lowered his head [awaiting death], reminding him of the blood of the Lamb."

steadfast. At age 15 she even cut off her hair to thwart pressures to marry.

Choosing the "third way"

The early death of Catherine's sister Bonaventura, a model young wife, appeared to seal Catherine's determination to enter a religious vocation where life might seem more than a brief, transitory experience. The great question was, What kind of religious life?

Catherine did not want to be an ordinary nun, either active or contemplative. And the exotic life of the perpetually enclosed anchorite *(see "Terms of the Religious Life" on page 13)* did not appeal. Her childhood experiences of religion predicted a mystical approach to the faith. At the same moment, Catherine was an active person, in body as well as mind. Christian service, traditionally offered by religious women to the poor and sick, attracted her.

Her cousin and first confessor, Tommaso della Fonte, was a Dominican priest, and he encouraged her to think in terms of the great mendicant reform orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic. Committed to preaching and service, these begging orders represented the last popular internal reform in the church prior to the Protestant Reformation. In 1363, Catherine joined the Third Order of the Dominicans. Thus, she chose a "third way," the life of the religious lay woman.

The Third Order provided a satisfying way for lay people to participate in the formal religious life. Catherine could live at home and direct her own activities. She was younger (age 16) than her fellows and rather bossy, but from the first she became an influence and formed her own *famiglia,* those men and women who found her especially appealing and devout.

Her spiritual family included many old friends, and new people, of whom Bartolomeo Dominici was most important. He joined Catherine in 1368 as her second confessor. Young and brilliant, Bartolomeo encouraged his charge to expand her horizons. During this period, Catherine learned to read. Precisely what she read can only be deduced from her later writings. However, it is clear she read the Bible, especially the Gospels. Her favorite apostolic sources were John and Paul. Of the church fathers, she became familiar with Gregory the Great and Augustine. Her language also reveals that she became deeply familiar with the popular preachers of the day.

Calling for conversion

From 1370 to 1374, Catherine continued serving the poor of Siena. However, she became increasingly interested in evangelism; the conversion of all sorts of sinners preoccupied her. Catherine did not have a sense of the profound conditions of class and status that defined the people of her time. In a kind, pedantic, scolding way she entreated all people to repent and be saved.

At this moment, Neri di Landoccio Pagliaresi, a Tuscan poet of some fame, joined her spiritual family. He became her secretary and greatly expedited her correspondence. She had not as yet learned to write. To Neri she dictated the letters that carried her ministry throughout Italy.

From these early letters we can discern the great themes of Catherine's ministry. She wrote to everyone, pleading for personal conversion and public reform. Sermons and advice were directed evenly at family and friends, princes, nuns, warlords, the pope, and quite ordinary sinners whom she did not know but about whom she had heard. The core of her thought was not original, but she provocatively synthesized theological ideas in a fresh and lively rhetoric.

The conversion of all sorts of sinners preoccupied her.

Catherine's theology

At the heart of Catherine's teaching was the image of Christ the redeemer—ablaze with fiery charity, eager sacrifice, and unqualified forgiveness. In Christ's sacrifice, life was engrafted into death so that we who were dead acquired life. And it was not the cross or nails that held Christ to the tree; those were not strong enough to hold the God-Man. No, it was love that held him there.

Catherine's theology included these motifs: truth, virtue, and love are primary manifestations of God; love for God and love for neighbor are indivisible; the church is the one indispensable vehicle for continuing Christ's life in the world.

Catherine became so popular that she was encouraged to attend the general chapter of the Dominicans that met in Florence in 1374. While there, she met a young priest, Raymond of Capua, who was appointed by the head of the Dominican Order as her third confessor. In Raymond, Catherine found her most sympathetic friend and her chief biographer.

Should women take on missions?

Her return to Siena was darkened by a visitation of the Black Death, which had first struck the city in the year of her birth. Catherine and her followers stayed in town to care for the sick and the dead. *(See box on page 11.)*

When the crisis abated, she began to consider the larger topics of public reform. Doubtlessly, she had heard these discussed in Florence. She contemplated the whole of Italy as an arena for her ministry.

At first, Catherine was hurt by criticism that while she, a woman, might do good, even evangelize, at home under the protection of her relatives and followers, it was shameful for her to contemplate distant missions. Typically, she turned inward to prayer and contemplation. Finally, she was able to report that God had answered her entreaties as follows: "Does it not depend on My will where I shall pour out my grace? With me there is no longer male or female, lower and upper classes, but all are equal in My sight."

With Raymond and two other comrades, Tommaso and Bartolomeo, she set out for Pisa to preach a crusade. It was natural for Catherine to cherish the crusading principle, the most romantic cause of her age. As the times grew more violent, the crusades also offered hope for an instant solution to the problem of an oversupply of fighting men in Europe. In a letter to the most infamous mercenary of the day, John Hawkwood, she argued that he might be transposed into a hero, a soldier of the faith, if he would quit Italy and turn his weapons on the infidel. Like the greatest of medieval reformers, Francis of Assisi, Catherine

dreamed of the liberation of the Holy Land and its restoration to Christian hands.

Spiritual "betrothal" to Christ

In all her public works, Catherine was sustained by intense mystical experiences. During prayer, she often collapsed in rapture. Indeed, in her letters, and probably in her sermons, Catherine was transported into ecstasy. During one such instance, she envisioned her own spiritual espousal or betrothal to Christ. This was a familiar image for medieval people. It represented to Catherine the union with the Godhead that all mystics sought to achieve through intense and loving contemplation. To modern Christians such imagery may seem inappropriate, but late medieval faith often expressed union with God in terms from the most intimate human union.

Mystical experience always led Catherine back into the world to serve. As she wrote of herself: " . . . she addressed petitions to the most high and eternal Father, holding up her desire for herself first of all—for she knew she could be of no service to her neighbors in teaching or example or prayer, without first doing herself the service of attaining virtue." With virtue, actions were done for God's sake alone. "The important thing is not to love Me for your own sake, or your neighbor for your own sake, but to love Me for Myself, yourself for Myself, your neighbor for Myself."

Freeing a captive church

In common with most reformers of her day, Catherine believed that the so-called Babylonian Captivity of the papacy was the great ecclesiastical tragedy of the times and the direct source of much clerical corruption. In the early fourteenth century, the papacy had removed to Avignon, divorcing itself from the special sanctity of its Roman roots. Popes became captive to the French monarchy.

In 1376 Catherine attempted to mediate a quarrel between Pope Gregory XI and the city of Florence, which he had placed under interdict. In a series of letters, Catherine boldly instructed the pope on the underlying problems of the church and charged him to return to Rome and deal with them: "Respond to the Holy Spirit who is calling you! I tell you: Come! Come! Come! Don't wait for time, because time isn't waiting for you."

One year later, after Catherine had visited with him in Avignon, Gregory XI finally entered Rome. It was the great moment of her public life. She continued to act for the pope among the people of Tuscany and almost lost her life when, in Florence, she was attacked by an anti-papal mob.

Her last effort

During this difficult and dangerous time, Catherine learned to write. She began to describe her mystical experiences in *The Dialogue,* which she referred to simply as "my book." Even as her public work failed and her health began to collapse, Catherine's spiritual life intensified. She dictated to secretaries most of this great summary of her Christian life. Its essence lay in the simplicity of Catherine's theology:

"A soul rises up, restless with tremendous desire for God's honor and the salvation of souls. She has for some time exercised herself in virtue and has become accustomed to dwelling in the cell of self-knowledge in order to know better God's goodness toward her, since upon knowledge follows love.

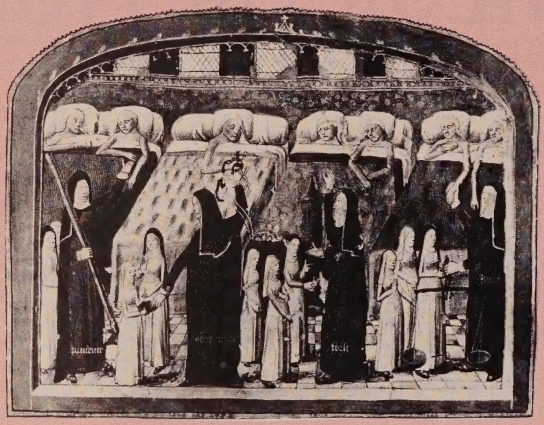
Catherine's elaborate tomb, a sign of her contemporaries' respect.

Scala / Art Resource, NY

THE BLACK DEATH

Catherine of Siena lived—and helped others—during the most devastating plague in human history.

Catherine of Siena was born in 1347. That year, according to writer Charles L. Mee, Jr., "in all likelihood, a flea riding on the hide of a black rat entered the Italian port of Messina. . . . The flea had a gut full of the bacillus *Yersinia pestis*." With that rat, and flea, and bacillus, came the most feared plague on record. In just three years, 1348–1350, the Black Death killed more than one-third of the entire population between Iceland and India. Remarkably, the young Catherine survived the onslaught.



Nuns treating patients in a Paris hospital. During one bad plague year the hospital shown harbored from 120 to 140 infants—some whose mothers had died there, and others who had been abandoned on the hospital's doorstep. In the Middle Ages, Christian women such as Catherine often took the lead in serving the poor and sick.

Centre de L'Image, Paris

Symptoms of the Black Death

What was this plague like, this unseen killer which so changed the fourteenth-century world?

"The first symptoms of bubonic plague often appear within several days," writes Mee in *Smithsonian* (February 1990). They include "headache and a general feeling of weakness, followed by aches and chills in the upper leg and groin, a white coating on the tongue, rapid pulse, slurred speech, confusion, fatigue, apathy, and a staggering gait. A blackish pustule usually will form at the point of the fleabite. By the third day, the lymph nodes begin to swell. . . .The heart begins to flutter rapidly as it tries to pump blood through swollen, suffocating tissues. Subcutaneous hemorrhaging occurs, causing purplish blotches on the kin. The victim's nervous system begins to collapse, causing dreadul pain and bizarre neurological disorders. . . . By the fourth or fifth day, wild anxiety and terror overtake the sufferer—and then a sense of resignation, as the skin blackens and the rictus of death settles on the body."

Society unraveling

"It is hard to grasp the strain that the plague put on the physical and spiritual fabric of society," Mee concludes. "People went to bed perfectly healthy and were found dead in the morning. Priests and doctors who came to minister to the sick, so the wild stories ran, would contract the plague with a single touch and die sooner than the person they had come to help."

People barred themselves in their houses or fled to the country. A fourteenth-century writer, Jean le Bel, wrote that "one caught it from another, which is why few people dared to help or visit the sick."

Yet when another wave of the plague struck Catherine's hometown of Siena in 1374, she determined to stay. Following the example of the early Franciscans and Dominicans, she and her followers stayed to nurse the ill and bury the dead. Respected nineteenth-century historian Philip Schaff wrote that during the plague Catherine "was indefatigable by day and night, healed those of whom the physicians despaired, and she even raised the dead."

Such courageous service was nothing new to Catherine. When she began her ministry, writes Caroline Marshall, "she performed the most distressing nursing chores among those incurably ill of cancer and leprosy. Her patients were in pain and often abusive. She believed that these experiences helped her to share in the suffering of the crucified Christ and were, therefore, a great help along her path to the mystical union with God, which was her ultimate goal." —*The Editors*

And loving, she seeks to pursue truth and clothe herself in it."

In 1378 Gregory XI died and was replaced by Urban VI, a difficult and rather cruel man. A rival pope soon appeared. It was the beginning of the Great Schism, and Catherine moved to Rome to assist Pope Urban. In spite of acute disappointment, she was able to complete *The Dialogue*.

Her public reforms had failed. The papacy was in worse condition than it had ever been. Nevertheless, Catherine's last effort, *The Dialogue*, remained as a tribute to the grace and power of her experience of God.

Catherine died in Rome on April 29, 1380, leaving the world in greater disorder and pain than she had found it. She left also a record of her splendid personal achievement, a life in Christ, detailed in letters and *The Dialogue*.

In years to come she would be canonized by the Roman Catholic Church, and in 1970 she was made one of two women which that church recognizes as Doctors of Theology. For Christians everywhere, Catherine of Siena provides a special and moving insight into the life of faith. □

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Five Religious Options for Medieval Women

In the High Middle Ages, Christian women found many ways to live a holy life.

ANN K. WARREN

Bildarchiv Foto Marburg

In this medieval illustration, a young woman (center) becomes a nun. The bishop (left of center) prays for her while sisters (behind her) invest her with the robes of her new order.

Christina of Markyate made a formal vow of virginity at age 14, in about the year 1110. Two years later her family, an upper-class, Anglo-Saxon family in England, forced Christina into a betrothal. She was kept in physical custody for a year, during which an ecclesiastical judge was bribed to set aside her vow of virginity. The marriage took place at last.

The resisting bride, however, would not consent to its physical consummation. She spent the night prepared for her deflowering recounting to her husband the story of St. Cecilia—the saint who had convinced her husband, Valerian, to live with her chastely until each could enter a monastery. Christina's husband had other dreams. The situation was at an impasse.

Christina then fled, with the aid of a local hermit. An anchoress *(see "Terms of the Religious Life" box on page 14)* named Alfwen hid her for two years. Christina was then moved to a hermitage at Markyate, where some male hermits lived, and they secreted her for four more years. Ultimately her family accepted that her resolve would not weaken. The marriage was dissolved, and Christina became technically free to live a more "normal" religious life.

By this time, however, the solitary lifestyle had become established. She became a hermitess, inheriting the site where she had hid for four years. In time a group of disciples formed around her, the hermitage becoming first a group household and ultimately a convent with Christina as abbess.

Christina's story takes us into all the types of religious life of her period. She was in turn a consecrated virgin, a recluse, a hermitess, and a nun. A traditional anchoress figures in her story as well. As her life illustrates, to be a bride of Christ was not necessarily to be a nun. Especially in the later Middle Ages, women pursued the religious life in a variety of forms.

Nuns

Most medieval women married the men their families chose for them or peaceably accepted consignment to the convent, the fate of many upper-class women of the High and Late Middle Ages. Such marriages, whether to men or to Christ, were reasonably successful. To be a bride of Christ was for many women not a denial of the "natural" desire to marry and bear children, but rather the route to a life more independent and intellectually creative than in the marriage of the day.

Nuns were *regulars*, that is, they lived communally under rule (Latin *regula*) and took the three monastic vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. They came to the convent, often as children, from the households of the rich and powerful; the shelter of a medieval nunnery was available to the daughters only of those who had the resources to build and endow them.

One example was the great Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), famed mystic, author, and adviser to popes, kings, and emperors. As a frail child, she was dedicated to the church by her family, minor nobles in Rhineland Germany. At age 8, Hildegard was deliv-

ered into the care of a woman named Jutta, the daughter of the regional lord and a hermitess or anchoress.

In her youth, Jutta had refused both marriage and the convent. She chose the solitary life and the anchorhold. Her father provided the setting and financial support. But Jutta's renowned holiness soon brought her not only the young Hildegard as disciple but also others desiring to be associated with her. What had been a cell for a solitary gradually became an *irregular* (without rule) household for a group. By the time Hildegard was old enough to take vows, the household had been formally constituted as a convent with Jutta as abbess. So it was that Hildegard rode out her career as a nun and later as an abbess.

While Hildegard's religious decision was made for her by her family, and Jutta chose her religious vocation with the support of her family, other women made religious choices in opposition to the voices of their families. They demanded the right to be religious and if necessary connived to achieve it.

Women may have been consigned to a nunnery, but never to any of the following professions. These were all lives of choice, lives embraced and desired, often against familial wishes.

Hermitesses

Occasionally women chose to be hermitesses. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, some women of religious bent rejected the communal and regulated life of the convent for the desolation and difficulty of a solitary life in the wilderness. Like many men in this period of religious revival, they took to the forests, the deserts, and the bogs. Alone or with a small group of like-minded individuals, they lived in makeshift dwellings and sought a mystical relationship with God. These hermitesses stood largely outside the formal organization of the church, unless they chose to accept the counsel of a caring clergyman.

The nunneries of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the hermitages that grew in this same period, were aspects of a society almost completely rural. There remained abundant land, yet uncleared, on which a pious noble might found a convent for his daughter; there were forests within which an enterprising hermitess might establish herself. Towns were few, the distances between them long.

These religious movements of withdrawal, paradoxically, gradually tamed and eliminated the environment to which they had fled. They cleared the land and provided outposts of civilization, encouraging and aiding the growth of towns and cities. By the thirteenth century western Europe was considerably deforested. The eremitic age was over, and new religious vocations for women emerged. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a more urban age, was the age of beguines and tertiaries.

Beguines

The beguine was merely a religious woman, *mulier religiosa.* She took temporary vows, usually of chastity and simplicity of life, donned some kind of identifying habit, and dedicated herself to good works. The beguine, a product of the growing cities of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Europe, worked in those cities, answering the needs of the displaced poor and sick. She was bound to no order. She might live at home or with a group who shared her values. She could later renounce her vows and marry without difficulty.

The beguine movement was the only religious current of the Middle Ages that was female in conception. It did not owe its impetus, its main support, or its direction to men.

Walters Art Gallery, ms.40, f.75

In the Middle Ages, every consecrated religious life involved much prayer. In this illustration, a woman prays while holding a "book of hours." A book of hours contained prayers, Scripture readings, and services for the seven periods ("hours") each day appointed for prayer.

Pressure for the beguine movements (and the tertiary movements) was generated in part by an imbalance in the numbers of men and women of marriageable age. From this pool of unattached women arose more women who wanted to assume religious lives and more women available (because unmarried) to lead them. They awaited only the right stimulus to aid them in focusing their lives religiously.

That stimulus emerged in late twelfth-century Belgium, from two women: Ivetta of Huy and Mary of Oignies.

Ivetta of Huy (1157–1228) was born to an affluent family near Liege. She was married at 13 and widowed at 18, already the mother of three sons. She resisted the demands of her family to remarry and with the support and encouragement of the bishop of Liege, she was allowed to take widow's vows. She gave the care of her children to her father and spent the next ten years using her home as a hostel for pilgrims and travelers and working in a nearby leper colony. Still feeling too much contact with worldly affairs, Ivetta then moved to the leper colony, enclosed herself in a cell, and lived there as an anchoress until her death forty-eight years later, by then famed as a mystic.

Mary of Oignies (1177–1213) also was born to wealth in the Brabant region. She was married at 14, against her will. More successful than Christina of Markyate, she was able to convince her husband that they live in continence and share a religious vocation. They worked together caring for lepers. Mary's reputation spread, and she became the center of a group of women who lived chastely and worked among the sick. In 1207, after about fifteen years of work with the lepers and of exercising a kind of moral leadership over the amorphous community that had grown up around her, she retired to an anchorhold near Oignes. She lived in the cell only six years before dying at the age of 36.

Mary and Ivetta both began their religious lives in the world. Though both gradually withdrew from the world, the concept that a religious life could be lived in the world was central to their perception. Poverty was also a tenet of their ideology; the families of these women had to constantly stand

guard that they not decimate the family fortune with excessive almsgiving. Combining apostolic poverty and service in the world, they thus shared characteristics of the movements spurred later by St. Francis.

From these women the beguines developed. The movement swept through the Low Countries and Germany in the thirteenth century, centered in the cities. The beguine movement accommodated women of more middling status than those who filled the nunneries. The beguines lived in the world, supporting themselves with any manner of honest work and spending the remainder of their time in charitable works. They served the poor and the sick in the urban environment. They banded together, unattached women of the cities, living separately or communally in houses (later called *beguinages*) built or bought with their own resources.

To get a sense of how many there may have been, by the end of the fourteenth century there were about 1,500 beguines living in Cologne, a city whose general population was only about 20,000. Over a two-hundred-year period, on average, perhaps one in ten residents was a beguine.

While acknowledging the social and demographic components of the movement, it is important to stress that this was essentially a religious happening, a great outpouring of religious fervor. These women, who stood apart from hierarchy and structure, were degraded by many. The word *beguine* itself was a smear meaning "heretic." Yet the movement could not be stopped. It offered women a wide range of charitable employment with a minimum of complication, a self-regulated balance between outreach and contemplative withdrawal, and the freedom to change one's mind and later marry or assume another religious role.

Tertiaries

Following upon the success of Francis of Assisi in the early thirteenth century, a number of mendicant communities (those who begged alms for a living) arose. These quickly organized into three orders. First Orders were the friars themselves—groups of wandering male preachers vowed to absolute poverty and complete dependence upon alms. Second Orders were for women in enclosed nunneries who sought to participate in the voluntary poverty of the friars, but in traditional form as nuns vowed to obedience. Third Orders took in laypersons, male and female, married and single, who in some measure identified with the reformist ideals and apostolic fervor of the early followers of Francis. Among these were many women, virgins as well as widows, who took vows (revocable), donned habits, and led religious lives of varying intensity. A tertiary was a member

A glossary

TERMS OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

abbess: the female head, or *superior*, of an abbey. An abbey may be either a convent or monastery, though more often the word designates a convent. (An abbess's male counterpart is called an *abbot*.)

anchoress: a woman who lives a solitary life of silence and prayer, especially one who remains in confined quarters, usually a single small room (or *cell*). In the later Middle Ages, an anchoress's quarters (the *anchorhold*) were often attached to the wall of a church. (This life was also pursued by men, who were called *anchorites*.)

beguine: a laywoman who belonged to certain sisterhoods that arose in Belgium and the Netherlands in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. A beguine took no vows, or temporary ones, usually of chastity and simplicity, and devoted herself to good works. Though often living in community, a beguine was free to hold private property and to leave the community and marry. (The male counterparts to the beguines were called *beghards*.)

cenobite: a member of a religious community (the word is taken from the Greek for *common life*). The opposite of *eremite*.

An English abbess. She holds a crosier, the traditional "shepherd's staff" symbol of her office.

The Mansell Collection

convent: a community of nuns who take vows and live under the direction of a superior. (Historically, the word could refer to a religious community of either men or women.)

eremite: a person who isolates himself or herself from society in order to pursue the religious life. Related terms include *recluse*, *solitary*, and *hermit*.

mendicant order: a group of friars, such as the early Franciscans, that depends upon begging alms.

religious: a member of a religious order. In canon law a religious is a person who lives in community and takes vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty.

tertiary: a member of a Third Order *(see next entry)*.

Third Order: an organization of lay people affiliated with one of the mendicant orders such as the Dominicans or Franciscans. Though living in the world, members of a Third Order try to live lives of sacrifice, simplicity, and service, like the friars (First Order) and sisters (Second Order) of their mendicant order.

—*The Editors*

From *Julian's Cat* by Mary E. Little (Morehouse, 1989). Used by permission.

of such a Third Order.

One of the most famous tertiaries was Catherine of Siena (1347–1380). The twenty-fourth of twenty-five children, her family was of a middling class. At 6 she had a mystical experience; at 7 she consecrated her virginity to Christ; at 16 she received the habit of a Dominican tertiary and then withdrew to a cell-like room in her family home for a prolonged period of intense mystical activity. She emerged after three years, committed to a religious life in the world. It was a brief life, but it took her into conversation and concert with princes and the popes of Avignon and Italy.

Like the beguine movement, the tertiaries were a natural development, hard to date and hard to fully account for in their sudden explosion. Certainly the Franciscan movement had awakened a hunger in many for a return to the apostolic ideal of Scripture. More secure than the beguines, because they had the religious protection of the orders to which they were attached, tertiaries organized in several ways. While some tertiaries merely supported local friaries, others viewed their status as tertiary as a vocation in itself. In the late thirteenth century the ranks of the fully committed tertiaries split. Some remained seculars, like Catherine of Siena, living in the world, while others moved toward community and rule.

Anchoresses

One more major vocation existed: that of the anchoress. The anchoress was a solitary who, having made the decision to live alone, took vows and was forever bound to her cell. Free of rule, she was literally enclosed, most often in a room or little house attached to a church. Common throughout the period from 1100 to 1500, anchoresses were found next to village churches, town chapels, cathedrals in episcopal sees, or guild churches in commercial cities.

If the nun and the hermitess in their peak periods represent vocations of withdrawal in a rural society, and the beguine and the tertiary represent religious service in a more urban world, the anchoress represents a thread that ties them together. The anchoress practiced total withdrawal and great asceticism, yet she was as at home in the cities of Europe as her forebears had been in the deserts of antiquity. Wherever enclosed, in whatever century, anchoresses held the vocation of deepest religious commitment. Many women became anchoresses who had been nuns, beguines, or tertiaries. Others became anchoresses direct from lay life, accepting and persevering in this remarkable challenge for thirty, forty, even fifty years.

Julian of Norwich, who lived as an anchoress in the turbulent fourteenth century. An anchoress was a woman dedicated to the religious life who lived permanently alone in a small room, usually one attached to a church. Julian, for example, lived in a cell attached to St. Julian's Church in Norwich, England. From her anchorhold she wrote *The Revelations of Divine Love*, the first English book known to be written by a woman.

The house in which Christina of Markyate lived with Alfwen was probably a single room, abutting the north side of the church, with access to the outside world through three windows: one for light, one into the church for receiving Communion, and one to the outside to conduct such affairs with the world as were necessary. Hundreds of these cells dotted medieval England. Inhabited equally by men and women in the twelfth century, they came increasingly to be occupied by women in the thirteenth. At the same time many new cells were built to provide spaces for the growing number of women desiring an anchoritic life. By the thirteenth century English anchoritism had become a largely female vocation.

Varied lives

Despite the array of nuns, hermitesses, beguines, tertiaries, and anchoresses, there were still those who eschewed all formal vocations, remaining independent religious persons.

The female saints of late-medieval Europe, then, were a varied lot. Of the sixty-nine Italian women who lived from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries and were canonized, thirty were nuns, twenty-two were tertiaries, six were anchoresses, and eleven were unaffiliated with any religious order. (The diversity is even greater than these figures express; for the purpose of analysis I tabulated only the vocation in which the saint reposed at her death. The careers of many women moved through several stages.)

Religious life for women in the Middle Ages was more complex than is usually imagined. The nuns and hermitesses of the eleventh and twelfth centuries; the anchoresses of the twelfth and thirteenth; the beguines and tertiaries of the thirteenth and fourteenth; the Observant nuns of the fifteenth—all were in the forefront of the religious moods of their days. Not all were Hildegards or Christinas or Catherines commanding popes and remonstrating kings and emperors. But they had a strong sense of identity and purpose and an absolute certainty of the rightness of their relationship with their Savior. To them the nunnery was indeed an earthly paradise. □

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Life in a Medieval Village

From birth to death, a peasant woman's difficult life intersected the church.

FRANCES and JOSEPH GIES

A medieval woman and man exchange wedding vows. Wedding ceremonies usually took place at the doors of the church, as shown here.

Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, ms. W40, f.75

A middle-level peasant probably lived in a three-bay house, the commonest type [with three areas separate but open to each other]. . . . Dwellings commonly still lodged animals as well as human beings, but the [barn] was more often partitioned off and sometimes positioned at right angles to the living quarters. . . .

Interiors were lighted by a few windows, shuttered but unglazed, and by doors, often open during the daytime, through which children and animals wandered freely. Floors were of beaten earth covered with straw or rushes. In the center, a fire of wood or of peat . . . burned on a raised stone hearth, vented through a hole in the roof. Some hearths were crowned by hoods or funnels to channel the smoke to the makeshift chimney, which might be capped by a barrel with its ends knocked out. The atmosphere of the house was perpetually smoky from the fire burning all day as water, milk, or porridge simmered in pots on a trivet or in footed brass or iron kettles. At night a fire-cover, a large round ceramic lid with holes, could be put over the blaze.

Trials of domestic life

A thirteenth-century writer, contrasting the joys of a nun's life with the trials of marriage, pictured the domestic crisis of a wife who hears her child scream and hastens into the house to find "the cat at the bacon and the dog

at the hide. Her cake is burning on the [hearth] stone, and her calf is licking up the milk. The pot is boiling over into the fire, and the churl her husband is scolding."

Medieval sermons, too, yield a glimpse of peasant interiors: the hall "black with smoke," the cat sitting by the fire and often singeing her fur, the floor strewn with green rushes and sweet flowers at Easter, or straw in winter. They picture the housewife at her cleaning: "She takes a broom and drives all the dirt of the house together; and, lest the dust rise . . . she casts it with great violence out of the door." But the work is never done: "For, on Saturday afternoon, the servants shall sweep the house and cast all the dung and the filth behind the door in a heap. But what then? Come the capons and the hens and scrape it around and make it as ill as it was before." We see the woman doing laundry, soaking the clothes in lye (homemade with ashes and water), beating and scrubbing them, and hanging them up to dry. The dog, driven out of the kitchen with a basinful of hot water, fights over a bone, lies stretched in the sun with flies settling on him, or eagerly watches people eating until they throw him a morsel, "whereupon he turns his back."

Around the dinner table

The family ate seated on benches or stools at a trestle table, disassembled at night. Chairs were rarities. A cupboard or hutch held wooden and earthenware bowls, jugs, and wooden spoons. Hams, bags, and baskets hung from the rafters, away from rats and mice. Clothing, bedding, towels, and table linen were stored in chests. A well-to-do peasant might own silver spoons, brass pots, and pewter dishes.

When they bathed, which was not often, medieval villagers used a barrel with the top removed. To lighten the task of carrying and heating water, a family probably bathed serially in the same water.

At night, the family slept on straw pallets, either on the floor of the hall or in a loft at one end, gained by a ladder. Husband and wife shared a bed, sometimes with the baby, who alternatively might sleep in a cradle by the fire.

What they ate—and didn't

The thirteenth-century villager's aim was not exactly self-sufficiency, but self-supply of the main necessities of life. These were bread, pottage or porridge, and ale. . . . In spring and summer a variety of vegetables was available: cabbage, lettuce, leeks, spinach, and parsley. . . . Nuts, berries, and roots were gathered in the woods. . . . Except for poisonous or very bitter plants, "anything that grew went into the pot, even primrose and strawberry leaves." The pinch came in the winter and early spring, when the grain supply ran low and wild supplements were not available.

Stronger or weaker, more flavorful or blander, the pottage kettle supplied many village families with their chief sustenance. If possible, every meal including breakfast was washed down with weak ale, home-brewed or purchased from a neighbor, but water often had to serve.

The most serious shortage was protein. . . . Besides the shortage of protein, medieval diets were often lacking in lipids, calcium, and vitamins A, C, and D. . . . It was a hungry world, made hungrier by intermittent crop failures. . . .

What peasants wore

[Peasant men wore] a short tunic, belted at the waist, and either short stockings that ended just below the knee or long hose fastened at the waist to a cloth belt. A hood or cloth cap, thick gloves or mittens, and leather shoes with heavy wooden soles completed the costume.

The women wore long loose gowns belted at the waist, sometimes sleeveless tunics with a sleeved undergarment. . . . Underclothing, when it was worn, was usually of linen, outer garments were woolen.

A poor peasant's garb . . . might resemble that of the poor man in Langland's fourteenth-century allegory, *Piers Plowman,* whose . . . hair stuck through the holes in his hood and whose toes stuck through those in his heavy shoes, whose hose hung loose, whose rough mittens had worn-out fingers covered with mud, and who was himself "all smeared with mud as he followed the plow," while beside him walked his wife carrying the goad, in a tunic tucked up to her knees, wrapped in a winnowing sheet to keep out the cold, her bare feet bleeding from the icy furrows.

The wedding day

Peasant couples usually spoke their vows at the church door, the most public place in the village. Here the priest inquired whether there were any impediments, meaning kinship in a degree forbidden by the church. The bridegroom named the dower [dowry] which he would provide for his wife, giving her as a token a ring and a small sum of money to be distributed to the poor. The ring, according to a fourteenth-century preacher, must be "put and set by the husband upon the fourth finger of the woman, to show that a true love and cordial affection be between them, because, as doctors say, there is a vein coming from the heart of a woman to the fourth finger, and therefore the ring is put on the same finger, so that she should keep unity and love with him, and he with her."

Vows were then exchanged, and the bridal party might proceed into the church, where a nuptial Mass was celebrated. . . . The ceremony was usually followed by a feast, a "bride ale," in a private house or a tavern. . . .

Birth and baptism

In the village as in castle and city, babies were born at home, their birth attended by midwives. Men were excluded from the lying-in chamber. Literary evidence suggests that the

While feeding the chickens, a woman carries under her arms a distaff (used in spinning thread). Preachers sometimes contrasted the never-ending duties of domestic life with the relative serenity of life in the convent.

The British Library, ms. ADD 42130, f. 166v.

woman in labor assumed a sitting or crouching position. Childbirth was dangerous for both mother and child. The newborn infant was immediately prepared for baptism, lest it die in a state of original sin. If a priest could not be located in time, someone else must perform the ceremony, a contingency for which water must be kept ready. If the baptizer did not know the formula in Latin, he must say it in English or French: "I christen thee in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen." . . .

Under normal circumstances the child was washed and sometimes (though not universally) swaddled, the godparents were summoned, and godmother or midwife carried the baby to the church, where the font was kept ever ready. The mother was not present, and in fact was not permitted to enter the church until several weeks later, when she had undergone the ritual of "churching," purification after childbirth.

Preliminary baptismal rites were performed, as in marriage, at the church door. The priest blessed the child, put salt in its mouth to symbolize wisdom and exorcise demons, read a Bible text, and ascertained the child's name and the godparents' qualifications. The party then moved into the church to the baptismal font. The child was immersed, the godmother dried it and dressed it in a christening garment, and the priest anointed it with holy oil. The ceremony was completed at the altar with the godparents making the profession of faith for the child.

When they bathed, which was not often, medieval villagers used a barrel with the top removed.

The christening party then repaired to the parents' house for feasting. . . .

Rearing children

Unlike the lady of the castle or many city women, the peasant mother normally nursed her own children. Only if the mother had no milk, or if she died, was a wet nurse employed. The evidence of the coroners' rolls indicates that during the first year of life, infants were frequently left alone in the house while their parents worked in the fields, looked after the animals, or did other chores. Older children were more likely to be left with a sitter, usually a neighbor or a young girl. . . .

A fourteenth-century sermon pictures a mother and her child: "In winter, when the child's hands are cold, the mother takes him a straw or a rush and bids him warm it, not for love of the straw, to warm it, but to warm the child's hands [by pressing them together]." When the child falls ill, "the mother for her sick child takes a candle, and makes a vow in prayers." . . .

Small children played; older ones did chores. In their teens, both boys and girls moved into the adult work world, the girls in and around the house, the boys in the fields.

Sickness and death

The Middle Ages produced the world's first hospitals and medical schools, but these important advances hardly affected life in the village. Doctors practiced in city and in court. Villagers were left to their own medical devices. Even the barbers who combined shaving with bloodletting (a principal form of therapy) and tooth-pulling (the sole form of dentistry) were rarely seen in villages. . . .

Life was short. Even if a peasant survived infancy and childhood to reach the age of 20, he could not expect to live much beyond 45, when old age (*senectus*) began. . . .

When death was imminent, the priest was sent for, and arrived wearing surplice and stole, carrying the blessed sacrament, preceded by a server carrying a lantern and ringing a hand bell. . . .

Village funerals were usually starkly simple. The body, sewed in a shroud, was carried into the church on a bier, draped with a black pall. Mass was said, and occasionally a funeral sermon was delivered. One in John Myrc's collection, *Festiall*, ends: "Good men, as ye all see, here is a mirror to us all: a corpse brought to the church. God have mercy on him, and bring him into his bliss that shall last for ever. . . . Wherefore each man and woman that is wise, make him ready thereto; for we all shall die, and we know not how soon."

A villager was buried in a plain wooden casket or none at all, in the churchyard, called the "cemetery," from *coemeterium* (dormitory), the sleeping place of the Christian dead. Here men and women could slumber peacefully, their toil finished, until the day of resurrection. □

A woman holds her infant son while stirring the ever-simmering pot of porridge.

Masters and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, ms. B.11.22, f. 37v

Frances and Joseph Gies are the authors of many books on the Middle Ages, including Life in a Medieval Village *(Harper & Row, 1990), from which this article is excerpted by permission.*

Inside the Convent

JO ANN MCNAMARA

How did convents arise? Why did so many medieval women enter them?

The abbey church in Werden-on-the-Ruhr, Germany.

Bildarchiv Foto Marburg

In the letters of Paul, we find that some women among the first generations of Christians renounced sexuality, marriage, and motherhood to consecrate themselves to the service of God and the Christian community.

Their commitment represented a social revolution.

In the ancient world, women were not recognized as having any identity outside the family context. Even the handful of virgins who served the goddess Vesta at Rome were entered by their fathers and generally married when they retired from service. Yet the Christian virgin (or widow, as the case might be), made for herself a recognized and respected place within the fledgling church.

Front-lines soldiers

During the centuries when the church suffered intermittent persecution by secular authority, these consecrated women played a vital role in Christianity's preservation and spread. They turned their homes into shelters for wandering preachers, presided over religious meetings of an indeterminate nature, and performed charitable works—distributing alms, nursing the sick, and visiting prisoners. When martyrdom became inescapable, women were in the front lines of the soldiers of Christ. The second- and third-century apocryphal gospels indicate that a common cause of Christian women's execution was their refusal to obey the Roman law of obligatory marriage.

This "virginity" movement was not an ascetic movement. Some Christian Fathers of the third century criticized consecrated women for their worldly dress and social activities. Tertullian, in particular, rebuked their claim that renunciating sex entitled them to preach and act publicly as freely as men. He maintained that consecrated women had not escaped the boundaries limiting the public activity of women. Rather, by making themselves brides of Christ, they had subjected themselves to the most demanding and powerful of all husbands. Later, medieval clergy claimed the right to supervise nuns, the spiritual brides of the Lord, since they acted as his vicars.

Virgins, not ascetics

In the third century, men took the initiative in asceticism, the practice of physical self-mortification that includ-

ed sexual renunciation, severe fasting, sleeplessness, and other practices. Consecrated women, however, soon emulated this new fashion. The first monastic community was organized in the Egyptian desert (c. 320) by Pachomius and his sister, who took charge of a segregated female group on the opposite side of the river from the monks. Thereafter, women are consistently referred to as partners in monastic ventures. Antony, Ambrose, Augustine, Basil, John Cassian, and Benedict of Nursia (to note only a few of the giants associated with the growth of monasticism) all had sisters who practiced the consecrated life. Many more women of the late Roman nobility experimented with the new lifestyle. When Jerome came to Rome in the middle of the fourth century, he found a wide circle of wealthy women, led by Paula and Marcella, who had consecrated their widowhood or virginity to religion.

From consecration to monasticism

During the dangerous centuries that followed, the consecrated life became identified more exclusively with monasticism. Nuns and monks clustered in large houses organized according to a variety of rules that emphasized discipline and routine. The day was divided into segments for sleeping, eating together, performing manual labor, and always, chanting the office in a perennial outpouring of praise to God. Women responded in great numbers to the attraction of this life. They planted new communities on the frontiers of the Christian world, contributing to the process of converting barbarian tribes.

Queens and noble women who inherited great wealth, and could, according to the laws of the Germanic peoples, deploy that wealth as they saw fit, established houses for as many

A SKEPTIC INSIDE THE NUNNERY

Spiritual vitality—and tensions—within a twelfth-century priory.

Aelred of Rievaulx (1110–1167) was an influential abbot who has sometimes been called "the English Saint Bernard." In his letters and sermons he described life inside a nearby priory. This account is taken from Holy Women of Twelfth-Century England *by Sharon K. Elkins (North Carolina, 1988).*

Aelred wrote that God was performing miracles daily at the Gilbertine priory of Watton: "In the midst of daily manual labor and the customary psalmody," the handmaids of Christ were devoted to "spiritual offices and heavenly theories. Many, as if saying farewell to the world and all things which are of the world, are often rapt in certain undescribable departures and seem to be among the choir of angels." . . .

In a sermon, Aelred used as an illustration a story about another Gilbertine nun. Able to exclude from her heart all love of the world, desires of the flesh, concern for the body, and anxiety about exterior things, this nun began to burn with longing for heaven. Sometimes when she knelt for prayer, she was overcome with a certain wondrous sweetness that extinguished her other thoughts and affections. While in this state, she seemed to be snatched from the world; and in an ineffable and incomprehensible light, she saw Christ, seemingly in a corporeal form but actually in a spiritual vision. After she spent more than an hour in this departure from her body, the other nuns struck her so that she returned to her senses. . . .

The mystical experiences of one became the aim of the others. When they tried to imitate the first nun, they too began to receive this grace, some even unwillingly.

One nun, a virgin and woman "of great distinction," objected. She attempted to dissuade her sisters on the grounds that the "knowing" was not spiritual but the result of illness or illusionary phantoms. Criticizing the others for paying more attention to these visions than to virtues, the skeptic asked God to make it plain to her if the visions were from him. Although she wanted the gift of discernment, she insisted that she did not want mystical experiences herself: she did not want her soul to be seized from her body and lifted from her mind, nor did she want to be separated from all the things she loved.

Finally, in Lent, while contemplating the passion of the Lord, the skeptic was "snatched up." In a spiritual vision, she saw Jesus hanging on the cross—bound with nails, pierced by the lance, profusely bleeding from his five wounds—and looking at her with tender eyes. Returning to herself, she broke into tears. According to Aelred, this experience convinced her that she had simply been less worthy than the others, and hence she had earlier been denied the same light they had enjoyed.

Aelred's portrayal of Gilbertine nuns shows a spiritual vitality that otherwise goes unmentioned in the records.

Nuns standing at the door of their dormitory, as shown in a miniature from a fifteenth-century manuscript. Notice the individual alcoves, separated by partitions.

Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, Fr. 20128

as two hundred women. Managing land and legally presiding over the inhabitants, these great abbesses were intrinsic components of the new feudal ruling class. They sent troops to war, held court, and enjoyed all the rights of noble men. Each monastery stood autonomous (though increasingly these became standardized under the Benedictine Rule). From the sixth through the tenth centuries, abbesses generally came from local ruling families, and they educated young women and helped to preserve the intellectual heritage of the ancient world. The original literary work of some of these nuns survives, most notably the histories, poetry, and drama of Hroswitha, a tenth-century Saxon nun whose learning may even have extended to some knowledge of Greek.

Why nuns lost their equality

During this early medieval period, monasticism was primarily a lay religious movement. With the late eleventh century, however, reformers moved aggressively to subject the clergy to celibacy and to reduce or exclude the influence of the laity in church government.

In the course of this revolution, nuns were split away from monks. Monastic men increasingly accepted ordination, and they enlarged their influence by strengthening their international ties. Led by the Cistercians, they joined previously autonomous houses and communities into orders, bound together with a common constitution and annual meetings called chapters. The officials of the orders were empowered to maintain uniformity. Monks could move through the system at the discretion of the officers, pursuing a broader career in many directions.

Nuns lost their rough equality with monks in function and organization. Their exclusion from ordination forbade them to follow their male counterparts into new areas of service. Their need for priests to perform the sacraments, in this more clerically centered age, turned nuns from an asset into a burden in the eyes of many clergymen. In every order, the nuns were segregated, enclosed, and ultimately separated as far as possible from the monks. (One intriguing exception to the trend were the Fontevrists, who maintained a mixed-sex community under the direction of the abbess of the mother house.)

The care of nuns became a distasteful responsibility that monks resisted in favor of more rewarding commitments. Only strong papal insistence throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries held various orders to include a minimum number of nuns. Despite this, women continued to flock to the monastic life in ever-increasing numbers.

Ordered to the cloister

In the thirteenth century, urban populations needed charitable operations. The church needed preachers to keep the population from heresy. These twin impulses gave rise to the mendicant orders: friars not attached to a monastery, who supported themselves by begging. Their preaching and acts of charity quickly spread the orders. Women enthusiastically responded; nuns set up convents to support the wandering preachers of the Dominican order.

Women planted communities on the frontiers of the Christian world, contributing to the conversion of barbarian tribes.

But after the first generation, women began to experience the distancing that had already isolated their twelfth-century sisters. Clare of Assisi accepted the cloistering of her convent, but she fought throughout her long life to maintain her privilege of Franciscan poverty. Hers was the only rule by a woman and for women that was approved by the medieval papacy. By the end of the thirteenth century, Boniface VIII decreed that all religious women, of whatever order or connection, should be cloistered.

The norms of religious life for high medieval women, therefore, were the silence and meditative practices of the cloister. Women interested in more public service had to avoid taking the formal vows of a nun. Despite the formal strictures of their rules, however, most medieval convents were open to frequent visitors seeking counsel or charity. Nuns continued to be involved with their families and communities, and they undertook social services of various sorts within the convent walls.

Convents varied in austerity. Some acquired a reputation for the sanctity of the nuns and the miracles that attended their daily lives. A few gained reputations for worldliness and even moral laxity.

Most convents undertook some economic enterprises, running estates donated to them and/or producing fine embroidery, candies, or ointments. In all, the life of a nun was useful and generally pleasant, though frequently punctuated by internal quarrels or interrupted by natural disasters or political upheavals.

Why did women enter convents?

Economic realities were such that no convent could support itself without the financial support of relatives. Consequently, only women of some economic resources could choose the religious life. Women of lower-class backgrounds could enter convents, however, as *conversae*, consecrated women who served the nuns without sharing their full religious duties.

Principally, then, the religious life provided upper-class medieval women with an alternative to marriage and a respected place in widowhood. And it provided lower-class women with dignified employment and charitable assistance.

The lives of saints insist that many of them defied their parents and great social pressures toward marriage and motherhood in order to live consecrated lives. Other evidence indicates, however, that some women were forced into convents because their parents preferred to pay the cheaper dowry demanded by the religious life.

Most nuns, whether they had entered of their own volition or in obedience to their parents' choice, settled into their lives as other women settled into marriage. □

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Christian Women Writers of the Medieval World

KATHARINA M. WILSON

Hrotsvit von Gandersheim

Christianity's first known playwright

Hrotsvit lived in the tenth century (932–1002) as a canoness of the Imperial Saxon Abbey of Gandersheim (Germany). She can best be described by a catalogue of pioneering achievements: she is the first known dramatist of Christianity; the first Saxon poet; the first female Transalpine [north of the Alps] historian; and the author of the only extant Latin epics written by a woman.

According to her own testimony, she objected to the great popularity of [Roman author] Terence's plays, which depicted lascivious pagan women frolicking in the pleasures of the flesh. She wanted to compose dramas substituting the heroines of Christianity: beautiful, chaste virgins, firmly resisting the insidious advances of pagan men. To show "frail Christian virgins" triumph with Christ's aid was her stated dramatic intent.

Hrotsvit is a polished stylist who doesn't lack a sense of humor, either.

Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, ms. Fr. 598, f.71v

A woman writer in her study. When Hrotsvit wrote her path-breaking works, she knew of no woman writer before her.

In one of her plays, *Dulcitius*, the protagonist is a pagan would-be executioner of three Christian virgins. He imprisons them close to the pantry so as to visit and seduce them secretly at night. As he enters the pantry, however, he is miraculously deluded and mistakes the dirty pots and pans for the girls. The scene is related by the girls, who peeping through the keyhole observe the foolish Dulcitius romancing kitchen utensils.

Hrotsvit's works were rediscovered centuries later by a German scholar, who in 1501 made her texts available for posterity.

Julian of Norwich

Writer of solitary devotion to God

Julian of Norwich is perhaps the most famous female exegete of the nature of the Trinity—particularly of Christ's mediating role between God and mankind.

Julian was born c. 1343 and probably grew up in Norwich, England. At some point she chose to live the life of an anchoress, a woman who lives by herself in an enclosed room in order to devote herself to prayer. Her cell was attached to the Church of St. Julian in Norwich.

In May 1373, when she was 30, Julian became sick and lay near death. Christ granted her a series of visions, and she recovered miraculously. She set out to record and to interpret her visions and to inspire her readers to a belief in divine love and compassion.

Julian's tone in her *Revelations of Divine Love* is consistently optimistic: God is good; God is merciful; all will turn out well in the end. Her work also affirms the value of man, created as he is in the image of a benevolent God. Julian celebrates Christ's mother-like qualities: the nurturing, loving, and protective aspects of his divinity. Indeed, this has become the hallmark of Julian's mysticism.

Morehouse Publishing

Julian of Norwich, who recovered from a near-fatal illness to write the first English book known to be written by a woman.

Julian was a mystic, not a theologian, so she emphasizes the importance of devotion and faith, rather than reason, as a way to achieve unity with God.

Hildegard of Bingen

Prophet to kings and emperors

Hildegard (1098–1179) has been considered by some the most prominent Christian woman of her era. She was founder and first abbess of the Benedictine community of Bingen, Germany, but her achievements move well beyond that. In the words of Barbara Newman: "Although she did not begin to write until age 43, Hildegard wrote a massive trilogy that combines Christian doctrine and ethics with cosmology; a compendious encyclopedia of medicine and natural science; a correspondence comprising several hundred letters to people in every stratum

Otto Müller Verlag

Hildegard of Bingen receives a vision. Hildegard knew and wrote to Bernard of Clairvaux, who endorsed her visions.

of society; two saints' lives; several occasional writings; and, not least, a body of exquisite music that includes seventy liturgical songs and the first known morality play." This is especially astounding considering that as far as Hildegard knew, no woman had ever written before.

Like many leaders of her day, Hildegard received various visions; these received the approval of the pope. Twenty-six of her visions—and her interpretation of these—form her most significant religious work, *Scivias,* which took ten years to complete.

Hildegard wrote to emperor Frederick Barbarossa as well as kings and clerics. She also, at age 60, began preaching tours on which she called for reform of the church.

The daughter house of Hildegard's community continues today in Eibingen, Germany.

Bridget (Birgitta) of Sweden

Voice for church reform

One of the most erudite female saints of the medieval church, Bridget is considered perhaps the finest Scandinavian writer of her time.

She was married at age 13. The couple had eight children and experienced a religious conversion while on a pilgrimage to St. James of Compostela to celebrate their anniversary. Bridget's husband entered a monastery, and she moved to a residence attached to it.

Here she experienced the first of her several visions of Christ and conceived of founding a new religious order dedicated to contemplating the passion of Christ and compassion of Mary. Christ himself dictated the rule of the order to her in a vision.

Bridget's *Revelations* were quite popular in the Middle Ages. They consist of direct speeches by Christ, Mary, and John the Baptist, and striking visions of the torments of Christ and of sinful souls in hell.

She traveled to Rome and later to the Holy Land. In Rome she became an important supporter of the church and called for the pope's return to Rome [from Avignon, site of the church's "exile."] Bridget called for church reform and chastised the pope for church corruption. "In thy curia arrogant pride rules," she wrote Gregory XI, "insatiable cupidity and execrable luxury." Yet Bridget designated the pope as supreme, and she was canonized shortly after her death in 1373.

Der Bilderschmuck der Fruhdrucke

Clare of Assisi

Famous colleague of St. Francis

Clare of Assisi was born as a member of the nobility in the Italian town of Assisi in 1194. At age 18, Clare became attracted to the ideals preached by her contemporary and compatriot Francis. Following his example, she renounced all worldly possessions.

Several years later she founded an order for women known as the Poor Ladies of Assisi (later called Clarisses or Poor Clares). Unlike the Franciscans, who were allowed to travel and to preach, Clare's followers were required to practice their reformist evangelical ideals within the traditional monastic setting. Yet they lived lives of extreme poverty, more austere than any undertaken by women before. In 1228, Clare won from the pope the right to maintain this original vision of extreme poverty. Her order quickly spread throughout Europe; in Spain alone forty-seven convents were founded in the thirteenth century.

Clare composed the rule for her new order. She also wrote several exhortatory letters and her *Testament*, or collection of autobiographical reflections.

Margery Kempe

Colorful, controversial pilgrim

Accused by her contemporaries of fraud or heresy, and often ridiculed by later scholars as hysterical or even crazy, Margery Kempe was born in Lyon, England, c. 1373, and died after 1438. She was an illiterate laywoman turned religious enthusiast who dictated her spiritual autobiography, *The Book of Margery Kempe*. It is the earliest known autobiography in English.

In her *Book,* Margery emerges as an intense, honest, devoted human being. Her conversion from religious apathy came when she was at the brink of death. Her subsequent religious odyssey took her to Rome, Jerusalem, Compostela [in Spain], just to mention a few places of pilgrimage.

Margery's frequent fits of crying and shrieking while contemplating Christ's sufferings, and her practice of admonishing people to return to the path of

Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, ms.16251, f.66

Kneeling women recall the devotion of Margery Kempe. Margery was accused of Lollardy, the beliefs associated with reformer John Wycliffe.

virtue, created difficulties for her. Her co-travelers almost threw her overboard, and they quickly abandoned her upon landing in the Holy Land.

Margery's message is the exhortation to a simple, direct relationshp with Christ based on unconditional faith and fervent love. She repeatedly downplays the importance of externals (such as fasting and the wearing of hair shirts), which, as Christ teaches her, are nothing compared to fervent love and devotion.

Other Leading Christian Women

Lioba (c. 700–782). At the request of Boniface, the "apostle to the Germans," she traveled to Germany to head the convent of Tauberkirschofsheim. Her letters to Boniface survive, as does some of her devotional poetry. Her vita records that she was so devoted to the Scriptures she had younger nuns read them to her while she slept; if they skipped a word, she would awaken and reprimand them.

Sonia Halliday

Elizabeth of Hungary

Anna Comnena (c. 1083–c. 1150), daughter of Emperor Alexius I of Byzantium, composed a history of her father's reign. Called the *Alexiad*, the epic remains the chief primary source for our knowledge of the period.

Frau Ava (1100s), having lost her husband and eldest son in a crusade, retired to a life of prayer, probably near a monastery in Melk, Austria. She composed a poetic version of the New Testament.

Elizabeth of Thuringia (or Hungary) (1207–1231) was the daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary. She was betrothed at age 4, and married at 14, to Ludwig, Count of Thuringen, who died six years later. Elizabeth devoted herself to the poor and the sick. According to one legend, Elizabeth was distributing bread to the poor, contrary to the direct orders of her husband's brother, Heinrich Raspe, who feared her charitable acts would deplete the state treasury. When he confronted her, however, the loaves were miraculously turned into roses. In Marburg she established a hospital for the poor.

Mechthild of Magdeburg (c. 1207—c.1280) is one of Germany's most outspoken and famous visionaries. Her criticism of corrupt clergy earned her much hostility. While ailing and almost blind, she composed her main mystical work, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, a collection of visions, parables, reflections, and advice clothed in courtly images: Christ is emperor, king, knight, or lord; he bestows rich gifts and lovely garments on the deserving souls gathered at his court. She is an original thinker and ardent advocate of a personal, uncompromising, intense devotion to the service of God.

Hadewijch (writings c. 1221–1240) is probably the best known of the Dutch mystics. She was a beguine, part of a revival movement in which women chose lives of charity and prayer without belonging to an established religious order. Beguines often had reformist ideas; as a beguine, Hadewijch was subject to some criticism. In her letters, she encourages people to help the needy and to devote themselves to an ardent love of God. Her mystical writings center around the idea of *minne*, or love, which is the human soul's longing for the Divine.

Gertrud "the Great" (1256–1302) spent her life in the Cistercian monastery of Helfta, Germany, a famous center of mysticism in the thirteenth century. Venerated by the people, Gertrud was viewed with some suspicion by the church hierarchy. Her visionary text, the *Messenger of Divine Kindness*, celebrates an intensely personal union with God. □

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She has been called a saint. A heretic. "A diamond among pebbles." Who was this illiterate French peasant girl, who in fifteen months changed the history of western Europe and became "the most widely known of all medieval women"?

Supernatural voices

Joan's father was the most prosperous farmer in the small French village of Domrémy. She spun wool and gathered the harvest, a typical life interrupted only by occasional encounters with soldiers from the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453), the lingering conflict between France and England. Once English soldiers burned the village church; two other times Joan herded the livestock to safety from their marauding invasions.

One summer when Joan was about 13, she was working in her father's garden at noon. Suddenly she saw a bright light and heard a voice. The voice called her "Joan the Maid" and told her to live a virtuous life. Voices came more often and gave instructions: Joan was to save France and help the dauphin (France's rightful heir) be crowned. Frank-spoken Joan questioned how she could possibly accomplish these astounding feats. The voices said God would be with her.

Was she hallucinating, or hearing the voice of God? Joan later identified the voices as belonging to archangel Michael and the saints Margaret of Antioch and Catherine of Alexandria. Her attributions were mistaken: these saints, though widely believed on in the medieval world, were probably not historical. Yet Joan's voices impelled her to attempt unthinkable tasks. She died rather than deny them.

How would she do it?

With her cousin's help, Joan gained access to Robert de Baudricourt, the local lord. He flatly told her cousin "to give her a good slapping and take her back to her father." Joan would not relent, and nearly nine months later she convinced her hearers that she was divinely chosen to help France. With six knights she rode over three hundred miles—across enemy territory, at night—to tell the dauphin of her plans.

Charles, the dauphin, amusedly an-

Joan of Arc

The courageous and controversial teenager saved her country.

North Wind Picture Archives

Nineteen-year-old Joan is burned at the stake. Twenty-five years later, a commission overturned the charges against her and declared her innocence.

ticipated the girl's arrival by staging a trick. When Joan entered the seventy-foot-long hall, filled with three hundred courtiers, the dauphin was not on his throne. Instead, dressed like the others, he was mingled with the crowd. Somehow, Joan walked directly toward him and addressed him.

"But I am not the dauphin," he protested.

"In God's name, gentle sire, you are," Joan responded. Then she revealed to him his private thoughts, proving she was no ordinary maid.

Charles turned her over to churchmen from the University of Poitiers, who examined her but found "only humility, purity, honesty, and simplicity." Soon she was leading four thousand troops to relieve the beseiged city of Orléans.

Astounding victory

After capturing nearby forts, Joan and her forces surrounded the city. She gave the English three days to surrender. When they refused, she led the charge, dressed in white armor and riding a white horse. "We must act when God wills it," she explained.

During the battle, an arrow pierced Joan's chest and emerged well beyond her shoulder. In great pain, she was removed from battle, but at the end of the day she returned. The sight of her led the French forces to victory. Joan halted the soldiers from pursuing the fleeing enemy, however. This was Sunday, reserved for prayer. The troops, awed by their victory, gave up swearing and prostitutes.

Was Joan a "mere mascot or general of genius," as writer Mary Lewis Coakley asks? Probably somewhere in between, but there is no doubt her presence boosted French morale. Mark Twain concluded that Joan's actions "crippled the gigantic war that was ninety-one years old."

Capture and inquisition

After helping take eight towns in eight days, Joan was captured, in May 1430, and sold to the English. (Her voices had warned this would happen.) The English moved to prove that her military success over them had come through sorcery.

The clearly-biased inquisitors broke virtually every rule of ecclesiastical hearings. Joan was imprisoned for nearly five months—not with a female companion, but with five English soldiers. She steadfastly maintained her virginity and courage through long days of questioning on more than sixty charges. She was convicted of being a schismatic (not a witch) and sentenced to be burned at the stake.

When Joan was led to the town square of Rouen for her execution, she became afraid and recanted. Her sentence was changed to life imprisonment. Three days later, however, she regained her courage and spoke the words that meant her death: "If I were to say that God sent me, I shall be condemned, but God really did send me."

At 9 A.M. on May 30, 1431, Joan walked toward the market square. She knelt and prayed for her enemies, and then mounted the prepared pyre. As the flames leapt upward, Joan asked for a cross to be held before her. Gazing upon it, her final word was "Jesus."

THE EDITORS

The Christian History Timeline

WOMEN IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

500

450–523: Brigid of Ireland founds Ireland's first nunnery and spreads Christianity there

474–545: Clotilde, queen of the Franks, converts her husband, King Clovis, who lays the foundation of the French nation

500–547: Theodora I, co-empress of Byzantine Empire, helps bring moral reform

518–587: Radegunde, queen of the Franks, maintains her faith despite King Clothaire's adulteries and his murder of her brother; later she founds a key monastery

600

614–680: Hilda of Whitby founds an English monastery that trains 5 bishops; she hosts significant Synod of Whitby, in 663

700

700–780: Lioba helps Boniface to convert the Saxons; founds abbey in Germany; invited to court of Charlemagne

800

fl. 840: Dhouda of Septimania writes a manual on feudal and religious conduct, urging her son to practice charity and serve the king and the church

900

932–1002: Hrotsvit composes the first known dramas in church history

CHURCH AND WORLD EVENTS

455: Vandals sack Rome

476: Last Roman emperor in the West

529: Justinian codifies Roman law

540: Benedict writes monastic *Rule*

590–604: Pope Gregory I, the Great

596: Augustine sent to convert English

622: Mohammad's *hijra* marks birth of Islam

711: Moslems cross into Spain

718: Boniface's mission to the Saxons of Germany

731: Bede writes *Ecclesiastical History of the English*

732: Charles Martel limits Moslem expansion at Tours

800: Charlemagne Holy Roman Emperor

843: Treaty of Verdun divides Charlemagne's kingdom

863: Cyril and Methodius lead mission to Slavs

885: Vikings besiege Paris

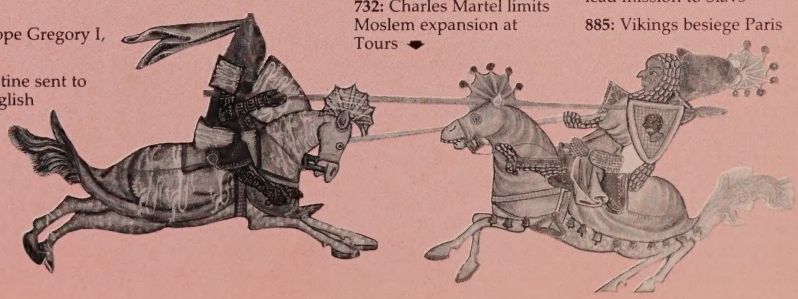
910: Monastery at Cluny founded

911: Vikings given land for settlement; leads to foundation of Normandy

962: Otto I crowned Holy Roman Emperor

988: Vladimir, Grand Prince of Kiev, baptized

995–1030: Olav brings Christianity to Norway



THOMAS O. KAY

Dr. Thomas O. Kay is chair of the department of history at Wheaton (Ill.) College.

1000

1046–93: Queen Margaret of Scotland vigorously reforms the church

c. 1083–c. 1150: Anna Comnena writes an important history of the Byzantine church and empire of her day

c. 1097–c. 1161: Christina of Markyate overcomes obstacles to live life of prayer and poverty; influences abbot of St. Albans toward holiness

1001–28: Stephen, King of Hungary, converts his people to Christianity

1054: East-West Schism

1066: Battle of Hastings; William of Normandy King of England

1071: Battle of Manzikert marks ascendancy of new group of Moslems

1073–85: Pope Gregory VII reforms church

1093: Anselm becomes archbishop of Canterbury

1095: Pope Urban II calls for crusade

1100

1122–1204: Eleanor of Aquitaine rules one-third of France; later co-rules, with Henry II, half of France and all England; joins crusade to Holy Land; financially supports Fontrevault Abbey

1188–1252: Blanche of Castile, queen of Louis VIII of France, wins dispute with French bishops; performs acts of charity

1194–1253: Clare of Assisi renounces wealth; founds Order of Poor Clares; wins from pope right to maintain absolute poverty; helps save Assisi from being sacked

1115: Bernard of Clairvaux founds monastery

1122: Concordat of Worms, compromise in church-state feuds

c. 1141: Gratian's *Decretum,* basis for medieval church law

1142: Abelard dies

c.1150: Medieval universities begin

1152–90: Frederick Barbarossa rules Holy Roman Empire (Germany)

1170: Thomas a Becket assassinated

1200

1207–1231: Elizabeth of Hungary, a noblewoman, ministers to the poor and establishes hospital

c. 1210–c. 1280: Mechthild of Magdeburg criticizes church corruption and writes *Flowing Light of the Godhead*

c. 1248–1309: Angela of Foligno devotes herself to prayer and austerity in Franciscan Third Order; writes *Experience of the Truly Faithful*

1256–1302: Gertrud the Great, after conversion at age 25, leads life of contemplation; writes *Messenger of Divine Kindness*

1204: Fourth Crusade; sack of Constantinople

1208: Francis of Assissi renounces wealth

1215: Magna Carta confirmed by King John

1215: Innocent III calls Fourth Lateran Council, which affirms transubstantiation, condemns Waldensians

1220: Dominic founds order

1271–95: Marco Polo travels to China

1272: Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*

1291: Fall of last crusading territory in East

1300

1303–1373: Bridget (Birgitta) of Sweden, widowed after 30 years of marriage and 8 children, founds order, gives to poor, writes, and urges papal reform

1343–c. 1423: Julian of Norwich lives enclosed life of prayer; writes *Revelations of Divine Love*

1347–1380: Catherine of Siena devotes herself to prayer; helps lepers and prisoners; urges pope to return to Rome; writes *Letters* and *Dialogue*

1366–1394: Agnes of Bohemia, betrothed to Emperor Frederick II, founds monastery

1373–1439: Margery Kempe undertakes pilgrimages and writes 1st known autobiography in English

1302: *Unam Sanctam* proclaims no salvation outside the church

1309: Papacy "exiled" to Avignon

1321: Dante's *Divine Comedy*

1337–1453: 100 Years' War

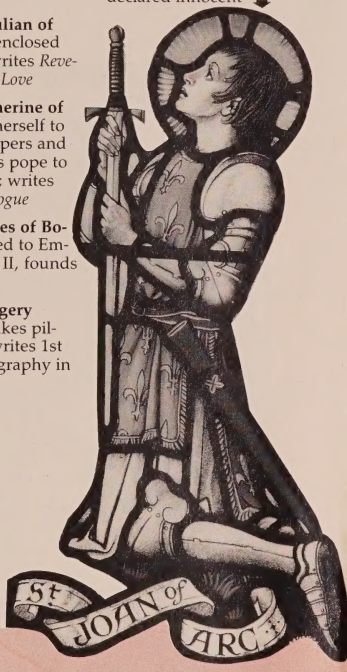
1347: First wave of Black Death

1378: Great Papal Schism yields multiple popes

1380: Wyclif supervises English Bible translation

1400

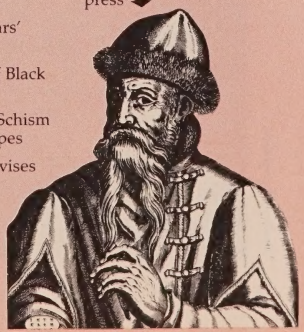
1412–1431: Joan of Arc, following supernatural "voices," leads besieged French forces to victory; burned at stake on charges of heresy; later declared innocent



1414: Council of Constance ends Papal Schism; condemns Hus

1418: Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*

c. 1450: Gutenberg's press



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Heloise and Abelard's Tumultuous Affair

She became an acclaimed abbess; he was one of the greatest philosophers of the medieval world. Yet their fabled love deeply damaged them both.

RUTH A. TUCKER

The Mansell Collection

The story of Heloise and Abelard sheds light on medieval society and the church in a way that few other stories do. Their drama captures not only deep human emotion, but also the spirit of the times.

The first scene opens with Abelard, one of the most celebrated teachers and philosophers of the medieval world, pursuing his innocent teenage pupil. From there it chronicles a relationship pierced intermittently with lust, intrigue, and violence—all filtered through the curtain of the medieval church. In the words of Henry Adams, "The twelfth century, with all its sparkle, would be dull without Abelard and Heloise."

The cast

Peter Abelard (1079–1142) was a brilliant young man who, by age 21 (before Heloise was even born), had gained such a reptuation for scholarship and debate that he was able to set up his own school. In the years that followed, his teaching career expanded, as did his writing—but always in the midst of controversy.

His book *Sic et Non* (*Yes and No*) created an uproar. Here Abelard demonstrated his basic philosophical method: "The first key to wisdom is the constant and frequent questioning. . . . For by doubting we are led to question, by questioning we arrive at the truth." Churchmen of the traditionalist mode were not ready for such skepticism.

But for all the criticism—and acclaim—that accompanied his brilliant career, Abelard is probably most re-

membered for his relationship with Heloise. Heloise was the niece of Canon Fulbert of Notre Dame. She was probably only 14 or 15 (some scholars have suggested Heloise was 17 or older), more than twenty years younger than Abelard, when she first met him at her uncle's home in Paris.

Act I, Scene 1—Seduction

Abelard was not a gentleman. Indeed, he admits in his autobiography that when he heard about the bright young Heloise, he began setting the snare to seduce her: "I . . . decided she was the one to bring to my bed, confident that I should have an easy success; for at that time I had youth and exceptional good looks as well as my great reputation to recommend me. . . . Knowing the girl's knowledge and love of letters, I thought she would be all the more ready to consent."

Abelard made arrangements with Fulbert, uncle and guardian of Heloise, to move into the home and serve as her tutor. As he had anticipated, she esteemed him as a scholar and teacher, and he quickly took advantage of her age and position. By his own testimony, there was "more kissing than teaching."

Abelard was careful to maintain his stature as a teacher: "To avert suspicion I sometimes struck her, but these blows were prompted by love and tender feeling rather than anger and irritation." The cover worked well, and Abelard realized what he set out to achieve: "Our desires left no stage of love making untried."

How did Heloise feel about this relationship? No doubt she was confused and overwhelmed by the attention paid her by such a prestigious scholar. Did she welcome his advances? She must have had mixed emotions, as do most youngsters in such instances. Some historians have argued that she was willingly seduced, but in a letter written years later, Abelard reminded her of his abusive behavior: "Even when you were unwilling, resisted to the utmost of your power and tried to dissuade, as yours was the weaker nature, I often forced you to consent with threats and blows."

Act I, Scene 2—Revenge

Scene 2 opens with Fulbert furious when he discovers Abelard's duplicity. Soon after, Heloise realizes she is pregnant.

Abelard apologizes to Fulbert, but the ring of sincerity is absent: "I protested that I had done nothing unusual in the eyes of anyone who had known the power of love, and recalled how since the beginning of the human race women had brought the noblest men to ruin." But he quickly sensed that his "apology" was not enough to appease his accuser: "To conciliate him further, I offered him satisfaction in the form he could never have hoped for: I would marry the girl I had wronged. All I stipulated was that the marriage should be kept secret so as not to damage my reputation."

Fulbert agreed outwardly to a secret marriage, but uncontrolled anger seethed within. Heloise was sent to live with in-laws until her son was born.Then Abelard placed his young wife in the convent near Paris where she had been educated as a small girl. His sister would raise their son, a drudgery he insisted was not suited to him: "Who intent upon sacred and philosophical reflection could endure the squalling . . . and constant dirt of little children?"

But if he thought he had resolved his problem, he was wrong. What happened next is best described in his own words: "At this news her uncle and his friends and relatives imagined that I had tricked them, and had found an easy way of ridding myself of Heloise by making her a nun. Wild with indignation they plotted against me, and one night as I slept peacefully in an inner room in my lodging, they bribed one of my servants to admit them and there took cruel vengeance on me of such appalling barbarity as to shock the whole world; they cut off the parts of my body whereby I had committed the wrong of which they complained."

Act II, Scene 1—Tormented love

Act I ends with the reader almost convinced that the despicable Abelard got what he deserved. Act II opens with Abelard in agreement.

His physical pain is over, and he is convinced that as deplorable as his castration was, it was, in disguise, a blessing to set him free to serve God fully. Never again would he lust for a woman. He entered the monastery of St. Denis to devote himself to the monastic life.

For Heloise, however, her nightmare had only begun. To Abelard she wrote: "Of all wretched women I am the most wretched, and amongst the unhappy I am unhappiest." At this point the reader senses the emotional damage she had suffered. Indeed, for all the light this story sheds on medieval society, it has a modern ring. Heloise loved too much.

She blamed herself for what had happened and confessed to Abelard, "It is the general lot of women to bring total ruin on great men." She had objected to marrying Abelard, fearing the marriage would be discovered and that Abelard's reputation as a cleric would be scarred. In fact, she went so far as to offer herself to be his lifelong mistress. "God is my witness," she wrote to

Priest and a woman in the stocks. Clerical adultery, although not unknown in the Middle Ages, was not condoned.

The British Library, ms. 10EIV, f.187ca

Giraudon

In this medieval illustration, abbess Heloise confers with Peter Abelard, the famous philosopher, on rules for convent life.

Abelard, "that if Augustus, emperor of the whole world, thought fit to honour me with marriage and conferred all the earth on me to possess for ever, it would be dearer and more honorable to me to be called not his empress but your whore."

Heloise loathed the prospect of becoming a nun, but to please Abelard, she did just that. "I can expect no reward for this from God," she lamented, "for it is certain that I have done nothing as yet for love of him. . . . I would have had no hesitation, God knows, in following you or going ahead at your bidding to the flames of hell."

She pleaded for his attention and painfully acknowledged that "I have been so neglected and forgotten by you." Her insecurity spilled over when she finally admitted he never really loved her: "It was desire, not affection which bound you to me, the flame of lust rather than love. So when the end came to what you desired, any show of feeling you used to make went with it. This is not merely my own opinion, beloved, it is everyone's. . . . I wish I could think of some explanation which would excuse you and somehow cover up the way you hold me cheap."

Act II, Scene 2—Repentance

Abelard readily acknowledged to Heloise, his "dearly beloved sister in Christ," that he never really loved her. "My love, which involved us both in sin, let us not call it love but concupiscence. In you I cloyed a wretched appetite, which was all I really loved."

But that was past. Abelard came to terms with his station in life. Indeed, he embraced it and desperately sought to bring Heloise to that same frame of mind. "It may relieve the bitterness of your grief if I prove that this came upon us justly. . . . My beloved, see how with the dragnets of his mercy the Lord has fished us up from the depth of his dangerous sea. . . . Consider the magnanimous design of God's mercy for us . . . whereby he made use of evil itself and mercifully set aside our impiety, so that by a wholly justified wound in a single part of my body he might heal two souls."

Abelard sympathized with her struggles, but he implored her not to be angry with God: "I beg you then, sister, do not be aggrieved, do not vex the Father who corrects us in fatherly wise." He likewise pleaded with her not to focus on himself but rather to "have compassion on Him who suffered willingly for your redemption, and look with remorse on Him who was crucified for you."

Heloise's convent became one of the most famous in France.

Act III—Twist of fate

In the final act, Abelard is confronted with the ultimate punishment for a medieval theologian—the charge of heresy. A man who has accepted God's judgment and turned his life around is accused by fellow clerics.

In 1121, Abelard was charged by the Council of Soissons with promoting Sabellianism (a heretical concept of the Trinity), and his book on the subject was ordered burned without opportunity to defend it.

Abelard did not forget Heloise. After she and her nuns were forced to leave their convent due to religious rivalry, Abelard donated land for a new convent, the Paraclete. He established Heloise as the abbess and helped formulate the rule by which they lived in community.

But Abelard's problems with the church continued, not so much because he was a heretic, but because he challenged his students to think, and he was convinced that faith and reason are compatible. In 1141, at the urging of Bernard of Clairvaux, his writings were condemned at the Council of Sens. This was the ultimate rejection. He was determined to appeal to the pope, but he died before he reached Rome. Heloise arranged for his burial in a plot at her convent, where she could watch over his grave.

Heloise outlived Abelard by more than twenty years and gained a reputation as one of the greatest abbesses of medieval monasticism. During her lifetime, the Paraclete became one of the most famous convents in France, with six well-established daughter houses. In a letter to her, Peter the Venerable, who himself ruled over more than two thousand Cluniac houses in Europe, enthusiastically praised her ministry: "You have surpassed all women in carrying out your purpose, and have gone further than almost every man."

Whether Heloise ever came to terms with her tormented love and fully submitted to God will never be known. Her surviving letters give no indication of that. So it was that Abelard, whose heart was right with God, died a condemned man, while the dejected Heloise was celebrated for her faithful ministry.

Legend tells us that when Heloise died, Abelard's grave was opened so she could be buried with him, and as they lowered her body, he opened his arms to draw her into his bosom. It is a touching climax, but not one that fits. For Heloise and Abelard, life was real. There was no place for sentimental legends. □

Dr. Ruth A. Tucker is visiting professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois. She is author of eight books, including Daughters of the Church *(with Walter Liefeld; Zondervan, 1987) and* Stories of Faith *(Zondervan, 1990).*

Scrovegni Chapel, Padua, Alinari/Art Resource

The Mystics

Why did mysticism flower in the medieval world—and why did women often lead in it?

ELIZABETH ALVILDA PETROFF

All this blessed teaching of our Lord was shown to me in three parts, that is, by bodily vision and by words formed in my understanding and by spiritual vision. But I may not and cannot show the spiritual visions to you as plainly and fully as I should wish; but I trust in our Lord God Almighty that he will, out of his goodness and for love of you, make you accept it more spiritually and more sweetly than I can or may tell it to you. —*Julian of Norwich*

Mysticism has been called "the science of the love of God," and "the life which aims at union with God." Mystics may be found in every religious tradition, sometimes as central participants but often on the periphery of accepted practice, for they map out new experiences of the divine.

A praying woman is visited by an angel in this fourteenth-century painting by Giotto. In the high Middle Ages, mysticism flourished, and there were more female mystics than male ones. These mystics recorded colorful visions of God, Christ, angels, and eternal worlds. Their insights and revelations, though sometimes controversial, also gave them a unique authority.

There is no identifiable mystical type (although scholars at times have tried to identify one). Mystics may be women or men, educated or uneducated, from wealthy or deprived backgrounds. Mystical experiences may be primarily visual or auditory, or so abstract as to elude any verbal formulation. The mystical path may be based either upon developing love or on the growth of the intellect. Mystical experiences can occur spontaneously, unexpectedly, at any time and place; yet many religions endorse ascetic practices and modes of prayer that encourage the development of mystical experience in some people. All traditions seem to agree that mysticism is a special gift, not fully under the control of the recipient.

Why mysticism flourished

During some historical periods, mysticism seems more prevalent and more authoritative, and mystics are more needed by their communities. Valerie Marie Lagorio, in her essay "The Medieval Continental Women Mystics," quotes Evelyn Underhill in support of the idea that mysticism not only seems to intensify in certain periods, but is itself richly creative: "The great periods of mystical activity tend to correspond with the great periods of artistic, material, and intellectual civilization. . . . It is always as if [the mystics] were humanity's finest flower; the

product at which each great creative period of the race had aimed."

One such period was the high Middle Ages in Europe (1100–1450), a time of great social change as the feudal system gave way to capitalism, cities, and a new middle class. We think of the Middle Ages as the age of faith, and so it was, but it was also an age of crisis. In such a context, mysticism was not a retreat from the negative aspects of reality, but a creative marshaling of energy in order to transform reality and one's perception of it.

Mystics were the teachers of the age, inspired leaders who synthesized Christian tradition and proposed new models for the Christian community. We know some of the men—Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas—but we are not as familiar with the women, although they were actually more numerous. Hildegard of Bingen, Clare of Assisi, Beatrijs of Nazareth, Angela of Foligno, Julian of Norwich, and other women mystics drew on their experience of the divine to provide spiritual guidance for others. Such women became highly respected leaders of the faithful. Their role as prophets and healers was the one exception to women's presumed inferiority in medieval society.

What female mystics experienced

Medieval mysticism was primarily visual and affective; the mystic *saw* and felt truth, saw God or Christ or the saints, and was flooded with love for what she saw. So powerful was this love that she felt compelled to share it with others.

Indeed, perhaps the only voice women heard that told them to *do* something was God's voice in visions. But God's voice was the only one that was really necessary, for with divine permission and guidance, anything was possible. As Dame Julian of Norwich said in her *Showings*: " . . . God forbid that you should say or assume that I am a teacher . . . for I am a woman, ignorant, weak and frail. But I know very well that what I am saying I have received by the revelation of him who is the sovereign teacher . . . because I am a woman, ought I therefore to believe that I should not tell you of the goodness of God, when I saw at that same time that it is his will that it be known?"

We should not think of medieval women mystics primarily as hermits withdrawn into a private world of prayer and meditation. These active women had completed a lengthy apprenticeship in the religious life, and they were capable of being spiritually responsible for large numbers of people.

Although medieval women mystics came from different classes, in different parts of Europe, and experienced spiritual awakenings at different ages, many of them did not become great teachers until they reached middle age. As children they were marked by precocious piety, and their rebellion often took the form of asceticism. From adolescence through their thirties they often lived withdrawn or secluded lives; if they were married, they were absorbed in family responsibilities and childbearing. All this changed, however, around their fortieth year, when they had the freedom to be visible as active leaders and effectively offer spiritual advice to others.

Why women were leaders

Unlike other periods of mystical revival, medieval mysticism was largely female. No one knows exactly why, but we can speculate on some of the factors involved.

Medieval men with religious vocations and leadership ability had a number of choices—they could be active or contemplative, priests, friars, monks, or hermits. Women who felt called to a religious life had one main option—to join a convent or a community of pious lay women. Thus, the primary approved form of religious life available to women was contemplative and enclosed. Medieval society believed women must be protected from violence and from their own sexuality, and women were thought to be "naturally" passive, meditative, and receptive.

Some aspects of convent life probably encouraged the development of mystical and leadership abilities. Until the fourteenth century, a religious community was the only place in which a woman would find a library, other scholars, and the opportunity to read and write. It was also the only place a woman had any privacy. The vow of celibacy exempted women from pregnancy and childbirth, and thus granted them much longer lives than those of married women. Convents also provided opportunities for leadership and teaching, whether in keeping accounts, tending the sick, or instructing children.

In late medieval Europe, women

VOICES OF THE MYSTICS

God, of your goodness, give me yourself; for you are sufficient for me. I cannot properly ask anything less, to be worthy of you. If I were to ask less, I should always be in want. In you alone do I have all.

. . . I saw that he [our Lord] is everything that we know to be good and helpful. In his love he clothes us, enfolds and embraces us; that tender love completely surrounds us, never to leave us . . .

Julian of Norwich
(c. 1342–after 1413)

Love penetrates the senses and storms the soul with all its power. When love grows in the soul, then it rises up with great longing to God and flowingly expands to receive the miracle that breaks in upon it. Love melts through the soul and into the senses. And so the body too gains its part and conforms in all ways to love.

Mechthild of Magdeburg
(c. 1212–1282)

Blessed may you be, my Lord, my God, and my Love most beloved of my soul: O you who are one God in three Persons. . . .

Blessed may you be, my Lord Jesus Christ. By your precious blood and by your most sacred death, you redeemed souls and mercifully led them back from exile to eternal life. . . .

My Lord Jesus Christ, you truly are the head of all men and angels, the worthy King of kings and Lord of lords; and you do all your works out of true and ineffable charity. You humbly permitted your blessed head to be crowned with a crown of thorns. Blessed, therefore, be your head and hair; and may they be gloriously adorned with an imperial diadem. May heaven and earth and sea and all things created be subject and obedient to your empire and your power unto eternity. Amen.

Birgitta of Sweden
(c. 1303–1373)

From *Eerdmans' Book of Famous Prayers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans); *Beguine Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad); *Birgitta of Sweden: Life and Selected Revelations* (New York: Paulist Press).

outnumbered men for the first time. Women found creative responses to this situation, and new religious movements of women began. The beguines in northern Europe, and Franciscan or Dominican tertiaries in southern Europe, lived in groups, supported themselves by manual labor, and devoted their lives to serving others and growing spiritually. Many famous medieval mystical writers belonged to these informal communities—Hadewijch of Antwerp, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Angela of Foligno, Catherine of Siena.

Finally, the spiritual practices recommended to medieval women (and possibly invented by them) encouraged the kind of growth and mental concentration that often led to visions and mystical experiences. We know that women's practice of asceticism was more austere than men's. Further, men in religious communities had a more intellectual education; the kind of meditation taught to women was visual and creative, not intellectual or abstract.

Four great mystics

The lives of the great women mystics are highly individualized, although there are some common themes in their writings.

The Benedictine abbess Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) began her religious life at age 7 or 8, when she joined her aunt Jutta, who was a recluse. Later their retreat was opened and turned into a convent, where Hildegard made her profession as a nun at age 14. Although she was unable to write German, and diffident about the correctness of her Latin, her dictated writings exhibit wide learning. While she claimed that all her knowledge came from a mystical source, she was familiar with the Scriptures, natural science, classical Latin literature, and neo-Platonic philosophy. She was taken seriously as a prophet by everyone, from Bernard of Clairvaux and the pope down to the humblest laborers. She began the *Scivias*, her major visionary and autobiographical work, when she was 42, but she had been having visions since she was 5. She insisted she saw her vision in spiritual and psychological wholeness, when she was fully conscious and aware of her surroundings. She distinguished between two grades of spiritual vision, her ecstatic awareness of "the Living Light" in which she could see nothing and, as Underhill writes, a "more diffused radiance which she calls the Shade of the Living Light, and within which her great allegorical visions were seen."

Bildarchiv Foto Marburg

The tomb of Gertrude "the Great" (1256–c. 1302), a famous mystic. At age 25 Gertrude experienced a profound religious conversion. She spent the rest of her life devoted to prayer and worship.

Hadewijch of Antwerp was a Flemish beguine of the first part of the thirteenth century. We know almost nothing of her external life, but we have three books by her: "Poems in Stanzas" and "Poems in Couplets"; letters on the spiritual life known as "Letters to a Young Beguine"; and a book of visions. A brilliant poet who wrote in Dutch, she knew the latest poetry in Latin, Old French, and Provençal as well. As a mystic she believed that the soul, created by God in his own image, longs to be one with divine love again, "to become God with God," as she put it.

Mechthild of Magdeburg (c. 1212–1282), the most famous of the German beguines and author of *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, decided at 22 to devote her life to God. She went to Magdeburg, where she knew no one, to become a beguine. In 1270 she came to the convent of Helfta, perhaps advised to make such a retreat because of her outspoken criticism of corruption in the church. There are seven books of her autobiographical *Flowing Light*, written at different stages of her life, and utilizing all the poetic and narrative resources of her time—lyric poetry, dialogue, courtly allegory, even homely folk wisdom. The first page of *The Flowing Light* announces the danger to which Mechthild is exposed because she is a mystic: "I have been put on my guard about this book, and certain people have warned me that, unless I have it buried, it will be burnt. Yet," she continues, "I in my weakness have written it, because I dared not hide the gift that is in it."

The Franciscan mystic Angela of Foligno (1248–1309) joined the Third Order for worldly prestige, but when her mother, her husband, and her children died suddenly, her attachment to St. Francis and his order became more profound. She underwent a powerful conversion experience in 1285, and in 1291, when she was 43, she had a vision of God's love for her as she was walking on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Francis of Assisi. Since she was illiterate, she dictated her experiences. *The Book of the Experience of the Truly Faithful* was read immediately and widely copied and circulated.

Message from the mystics

We too are living in a time of rapid and unpredictable social and economic change. We can certainly take as a model the balance of isolation and community, of reflection and action, that we find in these medieval women. We can use their emphasis on the spiritual life as a progressive climb—sometimes a steep and arduous one. In the writings of these women, God always teaches through love and always stresses the self-worth of the human. We need that love badly, and we need to extend it to others. □

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Writings From Women in the Medieval Church

Brief selections from four key books

Walters Art Gallery, ms.10222, f.30v

In this 1465 French miniature, a female saint sits in her study, quill in hand. Beneath her, the Latin text begins with Psalm 51:15—"O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth will show forth thy praise."

Catherine of Siena's *Dialogue* with God

"Catherine of Siena moved in remarkably wide circles for a woman of fourteenth-century Italy," writes Dr. Suzanne Noffke. (See article on page 8.)"She was a mystic whose plunge into God plunged her deep into the affairs of society, Church, and the souls of all who came under her influence." Catherine finished her most important work, The Dialogue, *in 1377–1378, about two years before her death at age 33. In it, Catherine directs questions and prayers to God, and then reflects on God's response. The book was one of the first books printed in Italy, Germany, Spain, and England.*

A soul rises up, restless with tremendous desire for God's honor and the salvation of souls. . . . Now this soul's will was to know and follow truth more courageously. So she addressed four petitions to the most high and eternal Father, holding up her desire for herself first of all—for she knew that she could be of no service to her neighbors in teaching or example or prayer without first doing herself the service of attaining and possessing virtue.

Her first petition, therefore, was for herself. The second was for the reform of holy Church. The third was for the whole world in general, and in particular for the peace of Christians who are rebelling against holy Church with great disrespect and persecution. In her fourth petition she asked divine providence to supply in general and in particular for a certain case which had arisen. [It is not known what situation Catherine refers to here.] . . .

[In this section Catherine writes what she perceives to be God's message to her.] You will find humility in the knowledge of yourself when you see that even your own existence comes not from yourself but from Me, for I loved you before you came into being. And in my unspeakable love for you I willed to create you anew in grace. So I washed you and made you a new creation in the blood that my only-begotten Son poured out with such burning love. . . .

It is your duty to love your neighbor as your own self (Mk. 12:33). In love you ought to help them spiritually with prayer and counsel, and assist them spiritually and materially in their need—at least with your good will if you have nothing else. If you do not love me, you do not love your neighbors, nor will you help those you do not love. . . . Every help you give them ought to come from the affection you bear them for love of me. . . .

I tell you, moreoever, when you return good for evil you not only prove your own virtue, but often you send out coals ablaze with charity that will melt hatred and bitterness from the heart and mind of the wrathful, even turning their hatred to benevolence. Such is the power of charity and perfect patience in one who takes up the burden of the sins of the wicked and bears with their anger (Rom. 12:17–21).

God loves us and delights in us, and so he wishes us to love him and delight in him and trust greatly in him.
—Julian of Norwich

The Curious Life of Margery Kempe

The Book of Margery Kempe *is the earliest known autobiography in English, yet it was lost for centuries until rediscovered in 1934. Margery was born in England in about 1373, and she lived a full and turbulent life for sixty-odd years. She was married and bore fourteen children, but her heart was in the pursuit of holiness, which in her day involved religious pilgrimages. She traveled by herself to the Holy Land, Assisi, Rome and many other places. She was criticized for her active life ("Woman, give up this life that you lead, and go and spin, and card wool, as other women do") as well as for her frequent sobbing or shrieking during prayer. Her life reveals the simple and devout faith of a medieval Christian.*

There once came a vicar to this creature [Margery], asking her to pray for him and discover whether he would please God more by leaving his cure of souls . . . or by keeping it, because he thought he was of no use to his parishioners. The creature being in her prayers and having this matter in mind, Christ said to her spirit, "Tell the vicar to . . . be diligent in preaching and teaching to them in person, and sometimes to procure others to teach them my laws and my commandments, so that there is no fault on his part, and if they don't do any better, his reward shall be none the less for it."

And so she gave her message as she was commanded, and the vicar still kept his cure. . . .

A good man who was a great friend to this creature, and very helpful to the poor, was seriously ill for many weeks on end. And people were very sorry on his account, for it was not thought he would ever live, his pain was so amazing in all his joints and all over his body. Our Lord Jesus said to her spirit, "Daughter, don't be afraid for this man—he will live and get on very well."

And so he lived for many years afterwards in good health and prosperity. . . .

These are written to show the homely intimacy and goodness of our merciful Lord Christ Jesus, and not to commend this creature.

Julian of Norwich: Christ who Lives in Me

One person that Margery Kempe visited was Julian, a Christian woman in Norwich, England. Julian (c. 1342–after 1413) was an anchoress, *meaning she spent her life in prayer, perpetually enclosed in a small room. In her case, the room was attached to the outside walls of St. Julian's Church in Norwich. In May 1373 Julian fell sick and was near death; she recovered, however, and received sixteen visions. These are described in her book* Showings, *or* The Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love.

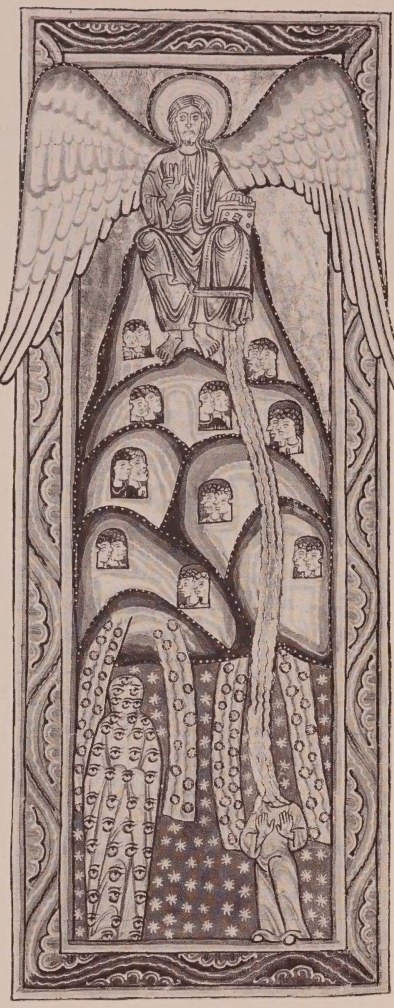
This revelation was made to a simple, unlettered creature, living in this mortal flesh, the year of our Lord one thousand, three hundred and seventy-three, on the thirteenth day of May. . . .Our Lord opened my spiritual eyes, and showed me my soul in the midst of my heart. I saw my soul as wide as if it were a kingdom. . . . In the

midst of this city sits our Lord Jesus, true God and true man, a handsome person and tall, honourable, the greatest lord. And I saw him splendidly clad in honours. He sits erect there in the soul, in peace and rest, and he rules and he guards heaven and earth and everything that is. . . .

The place which Jesus takes in our soul he will nevermore vacate, for in us is his home of homes, and it is the greatest delight for him to dwell there. . . . And when I had contemplated this with great attention, our Lord very humbly revealed words to me, without voice and without opening of lips, as he had done before, and said very seriously: Know it well, it was no hallucination which you saw today, but accept and believe it and hold firmly to it, and you will not be overcome. . . .

And these words: You will not be overcome, were said very insistently and strongly, for certainty and strength against every tribulation which may come. He did not say: You will not be assailed, you will not be belaboured, you will not be disquieted, but he said: You will not be overcome. God wants us to pay attention to his words, and always to be strong in our certainty, in well-being and in woe, for he loves us and delights in us, and so he wishes us to love him and delight in him and trust greatly in him, and all will be well.

And soon afterwards all was hidden, and I saw no more.



Rheinisches Bildarchiv

Visions as perplexing as Ezekiel's: An illustration of Hildegard's first vision, as shown in her book *Scivias* (a Latin abbreviation for *Know the Ways of the Lord*). The mountain symbolizes the kingdom of God; upon it sits God in majesty, with wings that stand for justice and mercy. The being covered with eyes (at lower left) represents the fear of the Lord.

How Did Hildegard Receive Her Visions?

Today, the name Hildegard of Bingen is little known, but in Hildegard's day, few Christians were more influential. Hildegard (1098–1179) was founder and first abbess of the Benedictine community of Bingen, Germany. She was also a visionary and prophet who called the church to reform. She advised the emperor Frederick Barbarossa, traveled, preached, and wrote extensively. Hildegard's best-known work, The Scivias, *was published in 1151 after ten years of work. The book consists of twenty-six visions, somewhat similar to those described in the biblical books of Daniel, Ezekiel, or Revelation. Reprinted here is Hildegard's description of how these visions came to her, followed by her first vision.*

It happened that, in the eleven hundred and forty-first year of the Incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, when I was forty-two years and seven months old, Heaven was opened and a fiery light of exceeding brilliance came and permeated my whole brain, and inflamed my whole heart and my whole breast, not like a burning but like a warming flame, as the sun warms anything its rays touch. And immediately I knew the meaning of the exposition of the Scriptures, namely the Psalter, the Gospel and the other . . . volumes of both the Old and the New Testaments, though I did not have the interpretation of the words of their texts or the division of the syllables or the knowledge of cases or tenses.

But I had sensed in myself wonderfully the power and mystery of secret and admirable visions from my childhood—that is, from the age of 5—up to that time, as I do now. This, however, I showed to no one except a few religious persons who were living in the same manner as I; but meanwhile, until the time when God by His grace wished it to be manifested, I concealed it in quiet silence. But the visions I saw I did not perceive in dreams, or sleep, or delirium, or by the eyes of the body, or by the ears of the outer self, or in hidden places; but I received them while awake and seeing with a pure mind and the eyes and ears of the inner self, in open places, as God willed it. How this might be is hard for mortal flesh to understand.

I saw a great mountain of iron, and enthroned on it One of such great glory that it blinded my sight. On each side of him there extended a soft shadow, like a wing of wondrous breadth and length. Before him, at the foot of the mountain, stood an image full of eyes on all sides, in which, because of those eyes, I could discern no human form. In front of this image stood another, a child wearing a tunic of subdued color but white shoes, upon whose head such glory descended from the One enthroned upon that mountain that I could not look at its face.

But from the One who sat enthroned upon that mountain many living sparks sprang forth, which flew very sweetly around the images. Also, I perceived in this mountain many little windows, in which appeared human heads, some of subdued colors and some white.

And behold, He Who was enthroned upon that mountain cried out in a strong, loud voice saying, "O human, who are fragile dust of the earth and ashes of ashes! Cry out and speak of the origin of pure salvation until those people are instructed, who, though they see the inmost contents of the Scriptures, do not wish to tell them or preach them, because they are lukewarm and sluggish in serving God's justice. . . . □

SOURCES: *Catherine of Siena: The Dialogue*, translation by Suzanne Noffke, O.P. (New York: Paulist, 1980). *The Book of Margery Kempe*, translation by B. A. Windeatt (London: Penguin, 1985). *Julian of Norwich: Showings*, translation by Edmund Colledge, O.S.A. and James Walsh, S.J. (New York: Paulist, 1978). *Hildegard of Bingen: Scivias*, translation by Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop (New York: Paulist, 1990).

Learn More About...

WOMEN IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

Bibliotheque Royale Albert Ler

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Which aspect of medieval Christianity do you find most puzzling? Which do you find most attractive?

2. If you could talk with any Christian woman from the Middle Ages, who would it be? What would you ask her?

3. As a whole, did women in the medieval church have more or fewer options to serve than women in today's church?

4. What problems did Christian women in the Middle Ages face, that modern Christian women do not have to face? What struggles do women then and women now share?

5. In general, what can today's church learn from the Christian women who lived in the Middle Ages?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

General studies

In the past twenty years, especially, many books have been written on women in the Middle Ages. The editors have selected ten of these volumes that provide a helpful introduction or general study:

Susan G. Bell, ed., *Women: From the Greeks to the French Revolution* (Stanford, 1973).

Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984).

Margaret Wade Labarge, *A Small Sound of the Trumpet: Women in Medieval Life* (Beacon Press, 1986).

Frances and Joseph Gies, *Women in the Middle Ages* (Harper & Row, 1980).

Julius Kirshner and Suzanne F. Wemple, eds., *Women of the Medieval World* (Basil Blackwell, 1985).

Angela Lucas, *Women in the Middle Ages: Religion, Marriage & Letters* (St. Martin, 1984).

Eileen Power and M. M. Poston, *Medieval Women* (Cambridge, 1976).

Shulamith Shahar, *The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages* (Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1984).

Susan M. Stuard, ed., *Women in Medieval Society* (Pennsylvania, 1976).

Ruth A. Tucker & Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women & Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present* (Zondervan, 1987).

MULTIMEDIA

Hildegard of Bingen (Morehouse, 1990). Color VHS videotape, 60 min., $39.95, includes discussion guide. Four fifteen-minute segments introduce her life and writings.

Women of Spirit (University of Wisconsin; to order, 1-800-747-7444). Series of five audiotapes uses dramatic readings and scholarly explanations to introduce Catherine of Siena and others.

Further study

It is impossible to study the medieval church without being struck by the prevalence of mystical experiences and writings. To guide readers who want to study this aspect more deeply, the editors asked Dr. Elizabeth A. Petroff, professor of comparative literature at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, to provide recommendations.

Rudolph Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago, 1985). Looks at medieval women's asceticism in the light of modern research on anorexia.

Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (California, 1987).

Lina Eckenstein, *Women Under Monasticism* (Cambridge, 1896). This remarkably readable history of medieval religious women was reprinted in the 1960s and is available in most libraries.

Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago, 1984). Introduces the lives of mystics, visionaries, and saints in this period, and shows how their spirituality was a response to the disturbances of their time.

Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegarde's Theology of the Feminine* (California, 1987). A remarkable study that properly places Hildegarde as a major theologian; the translations are breathtaking.

Rosemary Reuther and Eleanor McLaughlin, *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (Simon and Schuster, 1979). Contains three important essays relevant to medieval mysticism.

Paul Szarmach, ed., *An Introduction to the Medieval Mystics of Europe* (SUNY, 1984). Contains several excellent essays on women mystics.

Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness* (Dutton, 1961). A reissue of the book originally published in 1911, justifiably a classic in the field.

Her smaller, more personal volume, *The Mystics of the Church* (London: James Clark, 1925), is concerned with "the great creative soul whose special experience of God does something for his fellow Christians. . . ."

Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000–1700* (Chicago, 1982). A fascinating study that looks at patterns in saints' childhood, adolescence, adulthood, family life, and religious practice.

INDIVIDUAL WRITERS

The Classics of Western Spirituality Series by Paulist Press includes the following volumes:

St. Catherine of Siena: Dialogue (1987).

Hadewijch: Complete Works (1980).

Hildegard of Bingen: Scivias (1990).

Julian of Norwich: Showings (1978).

TRANSLATIONS/ANTHOLOGIES

Fiona Bowie, *Beguine Spirituality. Mystical Writings of Mechthild of Magdeburg, Beatrijs of Nazareth, and Hadewijch of Brabant* (Crossroad, 1989). A good introduction to beguine spirituality, and fine translations.

Elizabeth A. Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (Oxford, 1986). A thousand years of texts by women visionaries, many previously unrecognized or never translated.

Emilie Zum Brunn and Georgette Epiney-Burgard, *Women Mystics in Medieval Europe* (Paragon, 1989). Selections by Hildegard of Bingen, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and others. □

THE FAITH BEHIND THE FAMOUS

Isaac Newton

Library of Congress

Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), the first scientist ever to be knighted.

He has been called "the greatest scientific genius the world has known." Yet he spent less time on science than on theology.

CHARLES E. HUMMEL

Nature, and Nature's Laws, lay hid in Night.
God said, Let Newton be! *and All was* Light.
Alexander Pope

Alexander Pope's well-known epitaph epitomized Isaac Newton's fame. Even in Newton's lifetime, his contemporaries' adulation verged on worship. Following his death in April 1727, Newton lay in state in Westminster Abbey for a week. At the funeral, his pall was borne by three earls, two dukes, and the Lord Chancellor. Voltaire observed, "He was buried like a king who had done well by his subjects." No scientist before or since has been so revered and interred with such high honor.

Who was this man whose stature has dominated the scientific landscape for three centuries? Why did his achievements have such an impact on society? What role did Newton's faith play in his life and work?

Newton's faith

For Newton the world of science was by no means the whole of life. He spent more time on theology than on science; indeed, he wrote about 1.3 million words on biblical subjects. Yet this vast legacy lay hidden from public view for two centuries until the auction of his nonscientific writings in 1936.

Newton's understanding of God came primarily from the Bible, which he studied for days and weeks at a time. He took special interest in miracles and prophecy, calculating dates of Old Testament books and analyzing their texts to discover their authorship. In a manuscript on rules for interpreting prophecy, Newton noted the similar goals of the scientist and the prophecy expositor: simplicity and unity. He condemned the "folly of interpreters who foretell times and things by prophecy," since the purpose of prophecy was to demonstrate God's providence in history when "after [prophecies] were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by events."

A member of the Anglican church, Newton attended services and participated in special projects, such as paying for the distribution of Bibles among the poor, and serving on a commission to build fifty new churches in the London area. Yet Newton seldom made public pronouncements regarding his theology. He is remembered instead for his pioneering scientific achievements.

Birth and childhood

In June 1642 England began to suffer its first civil war. The year also witnessed both the death of Galileo in Italy and the birth of Isaac Newton in England.

Newton's life took place against the backdrop of three locations within one hundred miles of each other: Lincolnshire, Cambridge, and London. Newton's parents were

country folk who lived on a small farm in Woolsthorpe north of London. Hannah Newton's husband died soon after their marriage, at age 36. On Christmas Day, 1642, friends came to assist the young widow with the birth of her son Isaac. The baby was very premature and given little hope of survival; he was so small he could have been fitted into a quart pot.

When Isaac was 3, his mother—a strong, self-reliant woman—remarried and moved to a new home in the next village. The child stayed on at the isolated house, cared for by his grandmother, for the next eight years. Recent biographers have seen that separation from his mother, between the ages of 3 and 10, as influential in forming the suspicious, neurotic personality of the adult Newton.

In 1654, at the age of 12, Isaac entered the Old King's School in Grantham, which had a good reputation for preparing students to enter Cambridge and Oxford. The boy reached the top of his class, became interested in chemistry, and continued building intricate mechanisms, including a windmill and a water clock. Instead of taking part in the rougher games at school, young Isaac became an avid reader. Early in life he developed a self-sufficiency and resourcefulness that served him well in later years of research.

After four years Isaac returned home to help his mother with the farm. Despite good intentions, he spent more time keeping a notebook of observations on nature than looking after the animals.

After two years of frustration his mother decided he should complete his course at Old King's to prepare for the university.

Studies at Cambridge

In June 1661 Newton entered Trinity College, Cambridge, a community of four hundred scholars and students that was his home for most of the next thirty-five years.

The official curriculum was devoted mainly to Aristotelian philosophy—logic, rhetoric, and ethics. It developed Newton's formidable ability to demolish the arguments of anyone who crossed him. The prescribed course also included mathematics, Latin, and Greek.

Newton studied physics and optics under Dr. Isaac Barrow, an excellent mathematician and Greek scholar. He was the first to recognize his student's genius, and he introduced him to telescopes and current theories of light. The slumbering giant of Newton's intellect suddenly awoke.

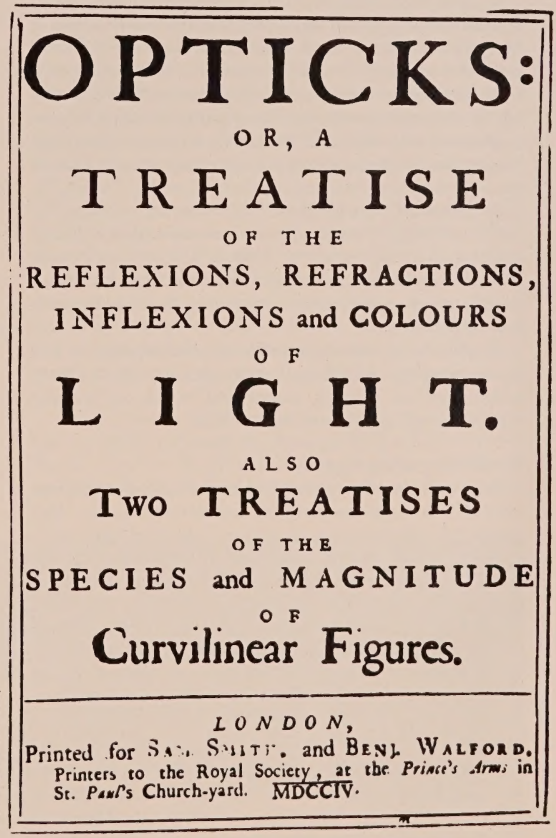
Most important for Newton, however, was the *unofficial* curriculum, his own readings. He explored the new philosophical world of the seventeenth century, and then moved to prominent scientific works, mastering Kepler's *Optics* and nearly everything written about light. Since that subject called for experimentation, grinding lenses and building ingenious apparatus, it was made to order for his mathematical mind and deft fingers. He observed the stars and made notes that later led to a new theory of light and color. During his last undergraduate year, investigating mathematics and dynamics, Newton made phenomenal speed toward the frontiers of knowledge in both fields. In short, he was essentially self-taught in a wide range of subjects.

Scientific developments

In 1665 flea-bearing rats carried the dread bubonic plague into congested London, where a fifth of the population died that summer. As the plague spread, students and teachers at Cambridge were sent home. Newton, with his new bachelor's degree, packed his notebooks for a return to Woolsthorpe.

During the next two years, his reading and thinking, experimenting and writing, laid the foundations for his epoch-making work in three major areas: mathematics, optics, and celestial dynamics. Having invented the binomial theorem, Newton devised a method of calculation that later developed into calculus. He also discovered that white light contains the whole spectrum of colors, and he formulated the inverse square law for orbiting heavenly bodies.

In short, during this period Newton became one of the leading mathematicians and scientists in Europe. How did he do it? Among other abilities was the unusual gift of holding in his mind a mental problem for hours, days, and weeks until he had solved it.


OPTICKS:
OR, A
TREATISE
OF THE
REFLEXIONS, REFRACTIONS,
INFLEXIONS and COLOURS
OF
LIGHT.
ALSO
Two TREATISES
OF THE
SPECIES and MAGNITUDE
OF
Curvilinear Figures.

LONDON,
Printed for Sam. Smith, and Benj. Walford,
Printers to the Royal Society, at the Prince's Arms in
St. Paul's Church-yard. MDCCIV.

Ann Ronan Picture Library

Title page of a work that went through three editions in Newton's lifetime. Newton made major advances in the field of optics. For example, he invented the reflecting telescope, and he showed that white light is a mixture of light of all colors.

Alchemy and achievement

Cambridge University reopened in the spring of 1667. Two years later, at the age of 26, Newton was appointed to the prestigious Lucasian chair of mathematics, a professorship he held for the next three decades. With minimal teaching responsibilities, he turned his attention to optics and constructed a reflecting telescope; it caused a sensation when it reached London in 1671. Soon he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. He read before the society his *New Theory about Light and Colors*.

During the next decade Newton's public scientific career dwindled as he devoted most of his time to private studies of chemistry, alchemy, and theology. Alchemists had long pursued a method to transmute base metals into gold, and during thirty years in Cambridge Newton labored for thousands of hours with his furnace as he pored over alchemical books. He communicated virtually nothing about his private passion to others. The extent of Newton's interest in alchemy, long an embarrassment to his admirers, became generally known only in 1936 when his alchemical writings of about 650,000 words became public.

In April 1686 Newton officially presented to the Royal Society his magnificent three-part *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. Written in Latin and known as the *Principia*, it was comprehensible mainly to mathematicians. Here the scientist demonstrated his greatest discovery, the law of universal gravitation (Every particle in the universe is attracted to every other particle by a force proportional to a product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them; $F = Gm_1m_2/r^2$). Also presented were his three laws of motion. Among scientific writings, Newton's *Principia* is unexcelled. It firmly established the new scientific approach to explaining natural forces and was soon taught at Cambridge. Nevertheless, Newton's views were opposed on the Continent for several decades.

In 1693 the scientist suffered a nervous depression that lasted two years. It is likely that decades of overwork were taking their toll, possibly augmented by mercury poisoning from years of alchemy experiments.

Powerful public figure

During the last thirty years of Newton's life the brilliant, retiring scholar became an influential public figure, attaining and ruthlessly wielding power.

In 1696 the king appointed Newton Warden of the Mint, and Newton took charge of the recoinage needed to stabilize a monetary crisis. He became an efficient administrator and shrewd political operator. He was responsible for prosecuting "coiners" who debased the silver coins by clipping their edges—an offense punishable by hanging. Newton took to the task with grim diligence. In 1699 he was appointed Master of the Mint. Two years later he resigned his professorship at Cambridge and moved to London where his niece Catherine Barton kept house for him.

In 1703 Newton was elected president of the Royal Society, which for two decades he ruled with an iron hand, taking offense at all who opposed his views. In 1705 he was knighted by Queen Anne. Newtonian science gradually swept the field as Newton secured for his bright young disciples positions where they could teach and write the science textbooks. Over the years he engaged in two long, bitter feuds with other scientists, one with the German mathematician Leibniz over who invented the calculus.

Newton wrote about 1.3 million words on biblical subjects.

His scientific legacy

Isaac Newton died on March 20, 1727, at the age of 85, after several years of enforced rest. His death was regarded as a national loss. A vast industry grew up dedicated to his memory—medals, poems, statues. (Submerged in the torrent of adulation were criticisms of internal contradictions in his writings, his atomistic theory of matter, and his mechanistic world-view.) Newton had became a national hero as well as the model scientist. While Copernicus and Kepler had died in obscurity, and Galileo under house arrest, Newton enjoyed success—largely because his discov-

NEWTON'S VIEWS ON SCIENCE AND FAITH

"This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being. . . . This Being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as Lord over all; and on account of his dominion he is wont to be called Lord God."

"When I wrote my treatise about our system, I had an eye upon such principles as might work with considering men for the belief of a Deity, and nothing can rejoice me more than to find it useful for that purpose."

On interpreting Scripture: "It is the perfection of all God's works that they are done with the greatest simplicity . . . And therefore, as they that would understand the frame of the world must endeavor to reduce their knowledge [science] to all possible simplicity, so it must be in seeking to understand these [prophetic] visions."

"The true God is a living, intelligent and powerful Being . . . He governs all things, and knows all things that are or can be done."

"I don't know what I may seem to the world, but, as to myself, I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

—*Selected by Charles E. Hummel*

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF ISAAC NEWTON

1642: Born December 25 in Woolsthorpe, north of London

1655: Attends Grantham Grammar School

1661: Enters Trinity College, Cambridge

1665: January—graduates Bachelor of Arts; August—moves back home because of the plague

1666: Develops binomial theorem; invents the calculus; postulates a gravitational force holding the moon in its orbit; and proves that white light is a mixture of light of all colors

1667: Returns to Cambridge; elected fellow of Trinity College

1669: Elected Lucasian Professor of Mathematics

1672: Elected fellow of the Royal Society

1684: Edmund Halley's visit leads to writing of the *Principia*

1687: Publication of *Principia Mathematica*

1689: Elected Member of Parliament

1693: Experiences mental breakdown

1696: Moves to London as warden of the mint

1700: Appointed master of the mint

1703: Elected president of the Royal Society

1704: Publication of *Opticks*

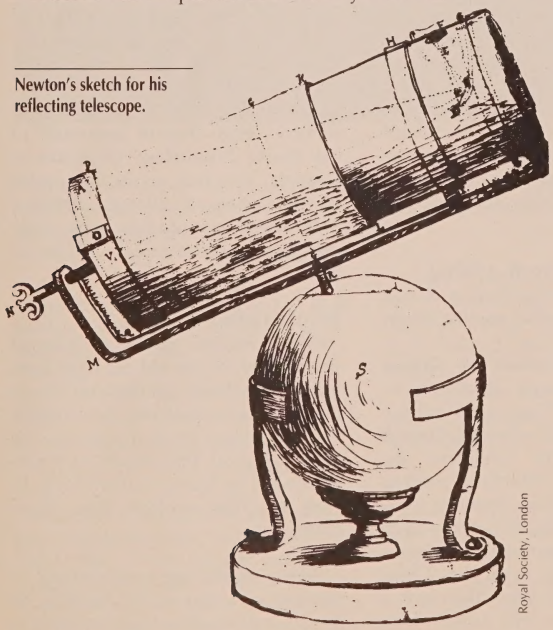
1705: Knighted by the Queen

1727: Dies March 20; buried in Westminster Abbey

—*Charles E. Hummel*

ery of one simple kind of attractive force (universal gravitation) could explain the motions of the planets, moon, and tides.

In the twentieth century, Einstein's expanding universe and Heisenberg's indeterminacy have undermined Newton's clocklike model of nature. Nevertheless, mathematical physicist Stephen Hawking, a current Lucasian professor at Cambridge, writes that "Newton's theory will never be outmoded. Designed to predict the motions of the heavenly bodies, it does its job with unbelievable accuracy . . . it remains in daily use to predict the orbits of moons and planets, comets and spacecraft. . . . Newton is a colossus without parallel in the history of science."



Newton's sketch for his reflecting telescope.

Royal Society, London

Theology and science

Newton's historical learning, including a knowledge of Jewish customs, was extensive. He also mastered the writings of the church Fathers. (Newton's interest in the doctrine of the Trinity led him to study the fourth-century conflict between Athanasius and Arius, who denied the status of Christ in the Godhead. Convinced that a massive fraud had perverted certain Scriptures, Newton adopted the Arian position.)

Despite his intense biblical study and belief in a creating God, Newton observed the distinction between religion and science made by Galileo: "The Bible tells us how to go to Heaven, not how the heavens go." During his presidency of the Royal Society, Newton banned any subject touching religion, even apologetics. He wrote, "We are not to introduce divine revelations into philosophy [science], nor philosophical [scientific] opinions into religion."

Yet for Newton this distinction was not a divorce, much less a conflict. Although the books of God's Word and his Works were not to provide the content of each other's teachings, they were bound together. Newton did not consider one to be sacred and the other secular, nor did Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, or Pascal—all practicing Christians. Only later Enlightenment philosophy produced a model of "warfare" between science and theology.

Newton's theology profoundly influenced his scientific method, which rejected pure speculation in favor of observations and experiments. His God was not merely a philosopher's impersonal First Cause; he was the God in the Bible who freely creates and rules the world, who speaks and acts in history. The biblical doctrine of creation undergirded Newton's science. Newton believed in a God of "actions [in nature and history], creating, preserving, and governing . . . all things according to his good will and pleasure." □

Charles E. Hummel is author of The Galileo Connection *and* Genesis: God's Creative Call *(both InterVarsity).*

Readers Respond to the "100 Events" Issue

Which events should have been listed? Here's what you said.

When we published Issue 28 on "The 100 Most Important Events in Church History," we had no idea it would draw more response than any issue in our history.

The Religious News Service published a feature story on the issue, as did the Associated Press, and these stories were carried in leading newspapers such as the Chicago *Tribune*.

Most gratifying to us, however, was that so many of you, our family of readers, wrote. You told us which events we should have included—and which we should have left out.

Only a Western view?

Several readers wrote about a Western slant in the entries. One eloquent statement came from Dr. Paul E. Pierson, dean and professor of history of mission and Latin American studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California:

The 25 most important events listed (after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and the Council of Nicea) has no event which takes place outside the Western world, unless it was the adoption of Christianity in Russia by Vladimir. The list is incredibly parochial and deficient in its focus when we consider that at least 60 percent of practicing Christians in the world today are found in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

We agree. Our research was among church historians from North America, and we openly admitted that the results were thus biased from a Western viewpoint. Rather than disregard that research, however, we decided to use it, admit its perspective, and try to cover non-Western developments in subsequent issues. We are planning issues on the following: Columbus's landing and the coming of Christianity to Latin America; some aspect of Christianity in Africa; and Pentecostalism, a movement with explosive growth in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We stand committed to covering church history in other regions and cultures.

More attention to Pentecostals

Other readers felt that the rise of Pentecostalism deserved a higher profile. One adviser wrote:

Pentecostal churches are perhaps the fastest growing churches in the U.S. and around the world. The Pentecostal and charismatic movements . . . will likely determine the nature of popular Christianity for many years to come.

Our top 100 list and timeline did include the Azusa Street Revival in 1906, which helped to spread early Pentecostalism. It also included a date for the more recent charismatic renewal.

According to David Barrett, compiler of *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 21 percent of all Christians worldwide can be identified as Pentecostals or charismatics. This movement, then, which officially began less than a century ago, now claims one-fifth of worldwide Christianity. We will publish an issue on the origins and development of Pentecostalism within the next two years.

Specific events worth adding

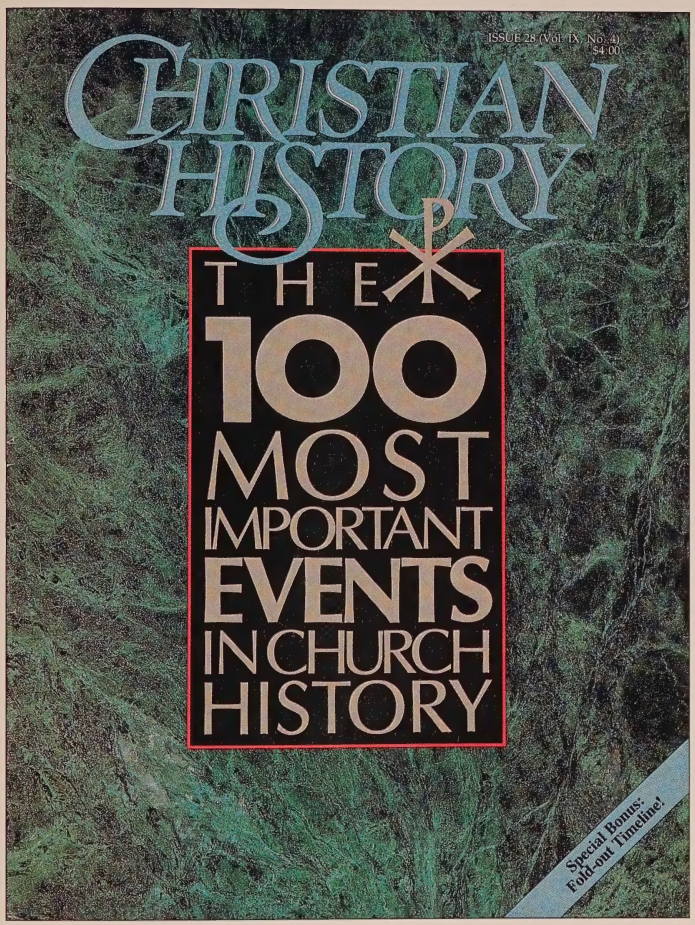
In addition, various readers recommended the following specific events be included:

529—Second Council of Orange upholds Augustine's doctrines on grace and free will against the Semi-Pelagian views. **553—Second Council of Constantinople** condemns the Three Chapters, influential writings tainted with heretical Nestorian ideas about the nature of Christ. **680—Third Council of Constantinople** condemns Monothelitism, the belief that Christ had only one will, rather than both a divine and human will. **c.730?—John of Damascus writes *Fount of Wisdom,*** a work that greatly influences later theology. **1158—Peter Lombard completes *Four Books of Sentences,*** which becomes a leading medieval textbook of theology. **c. 1190—Joachim of Fiore writes three volumes** of history and eschatology; these inspire many movements for reform in subsequent centuries. **1324—Marsiglio of Padua completes *Defensor Pacis,*** a work challenging medieval church-state relations with ideas ahead of its time. **1438—Council of Florence** begins, which issues a Decree of Union between the Western (Roman) and Eastern (Orthodox) churches. **1742—David Brainerd appointed missionary** to Native Americans, leading to revivals among the Delaware tribe. **1785—First general convention to form the Protestant Episcopal Church** in the U.S.A. **1845—Southern Baptist Convention** is organized. **1914—The Assemblies of God** is formed. **1931—First missionary radio station,** HCJB, begins operations, indicative of expanding evangelical missions work in twentieth century. **1968—Fourth assembly of the World Council of Churches** in Uppsala, Sweden, spurs movement on liberation theology. **1987/8—Televangelism scandals** rock religious television and parachurch ministries.

Martin Luther King, Jr.?

Other readers wrote to suggest events they felt should *not* have been included. At least nine readers (including one who canceled his subscription over the choice) wrote to question the inclusion of the 1963 March on Washington led by Martin Luther King, Jr. Here are brief excerpts from those letters:

While King was very significant and influential in the area of civil and social reform, was he significant and influential in religious and spiritual reform? Yes, he was.



Only to the detriment of the church, for he confused social reform with the advancement of God's kingdom.

M.M., Willis, TX

A march in Washington, D.C., by a cursing, screaming mob led by one of the most depraved people in the anti-Christ movement, Martin Luther King, you declare to be one of the 100 most important events in church history!?! Why don't you accept Christ and become a Christian!

Unsigned, NC

Realizing I will probably be labeled a bigot, how in the world can you place Dr. King's march on Washington among the greatest events in church history? Had it been great events in history in general or in American history, maybe I could buy into that, but I'm afraid this was just a blunder. Is someone there trying to make up for past mistakes of the white man?

R.H., Mt. Vernon, OH

King's theology was anything but Christian, he was sexually immoral, he plagiarized his doctoral dissertation, and was deeply involved with Communists and their programs.

Why does Mr. Roberts think that King's lobbying for socialistic legislation has anything to do with the Christian church?

L.B., New York, NY

I wrote lengthy personal letters to each of these readers (and everyone who responded), and in those I mentioned the following ideas:

Our list was based on important *events,* not universally admired *people.* King was controversial in his day, and he continues to be. Yet the historians who helped select the events felt, and we agreed, that the civil-rights movement has had a lasting impact on both church and society. No Christian in the West has been unaffected by it, and the movement has had worldwide repercussions. The March on Washington represents this movement perhaps as well as any event.

Does the event belong to church history? The march arose from within the black church and also involved representatives of nearly every major white denomination. The movement of which it was probably the climax changed the daily lives of millions of African-American Christians, and it continues to greatly affect white Christians in many ways. So yes, we believe the event belongs not only to civil history, but also to church history.

There was no intentional skewing of the data for theological reasons.

Corrections

Several sharp-eyed readers pointed out the following:

Mary Queen of Scots should have been identified as Elizabeth's cousin, not her half-sister.

The Millenary Petition was so called because it supposedly represented the wishes of one thousand ministers, but it did not actually contain one thousand signatures.

Shakespeare's Macbeth should have been spelled with a lowercase *b.*

Adoniram and Ann Haseltine Judson set sail for Asia in 1812, not in 1816 as listed on the foldout timeline.

Future overviews

Readers made many other worthy suggestions and comments. For example, at least three suggested that Luther's posting of the *Ninety-Five Theses* and the Diet of Worms were related and could have been combined.

Most of the comments were positive and made us feel the hard work was worth it. As one person wrote, "It was great reading and put in a manageable perspective an enormous amount . . . for once one was able to look at the forest instead of zeroing in on the trees."

We are now considering future "overview" issues such as "Key Turning Points in Church History." As always, we welcome your thoughts on this idea.

KEVIN A. MILLER, EDITOR

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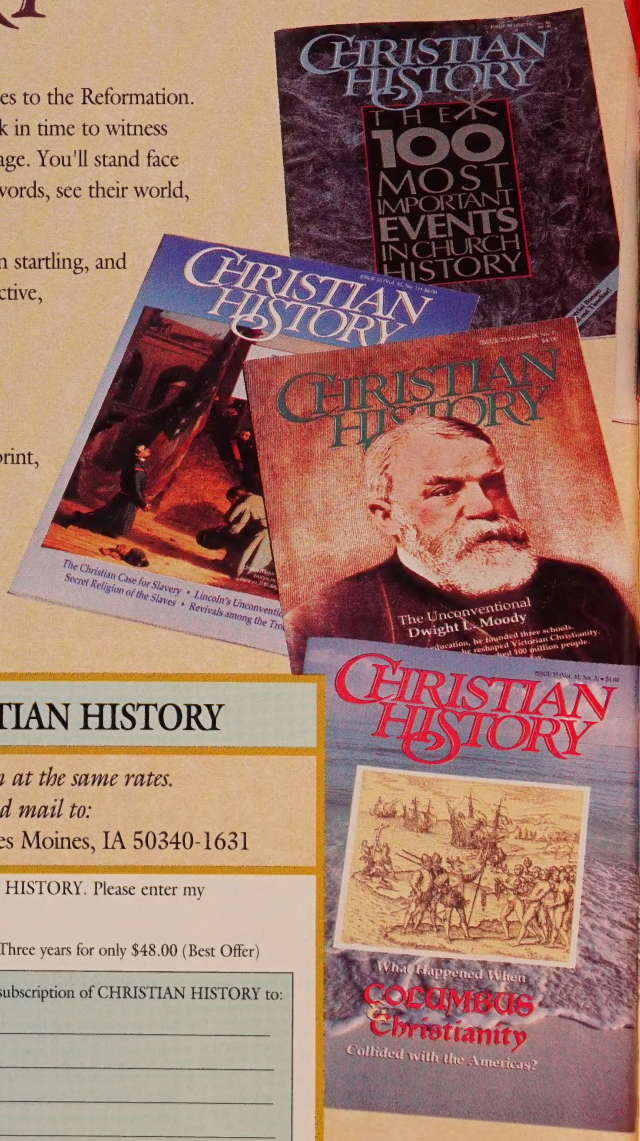

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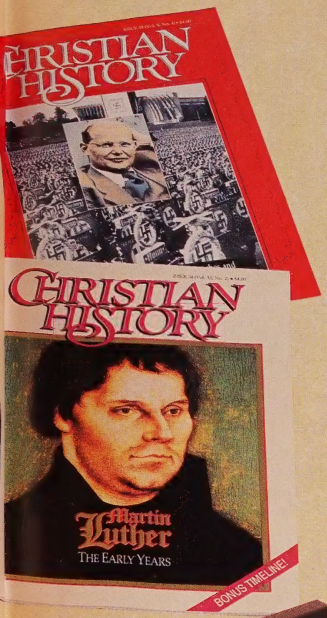

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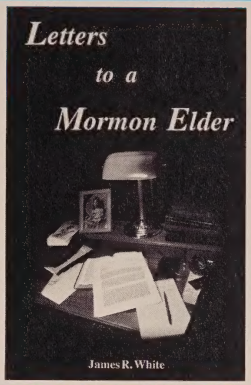

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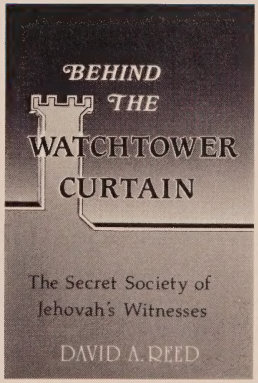

This work by former Jehovah's Witness David Reed is designed to answer the claims made by the Watchtower Society, expose their false teaching, cultic practices, and to lay bare the secrets of the Watchtower. The author's purpose is to have these words of warning reach potential converts to the Watchtower Society before they become entrapped in a web from which they cannot escape. This book is a must-read for the potential convert, concerned relative or friend of anyone being lured into the Society.

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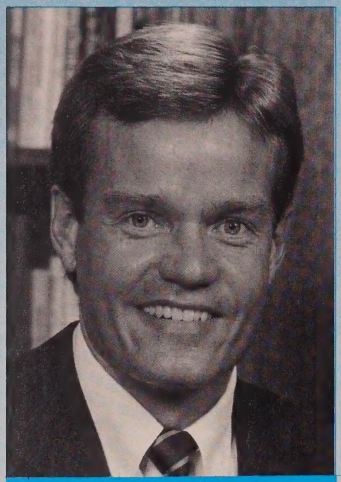

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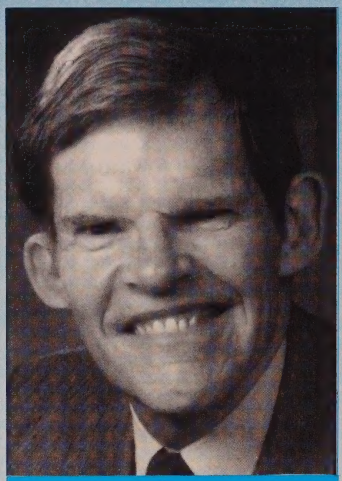

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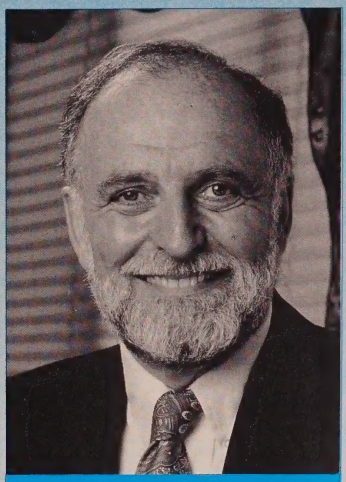

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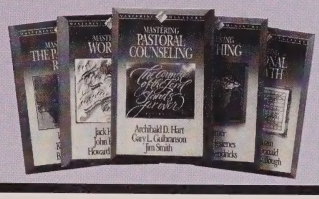

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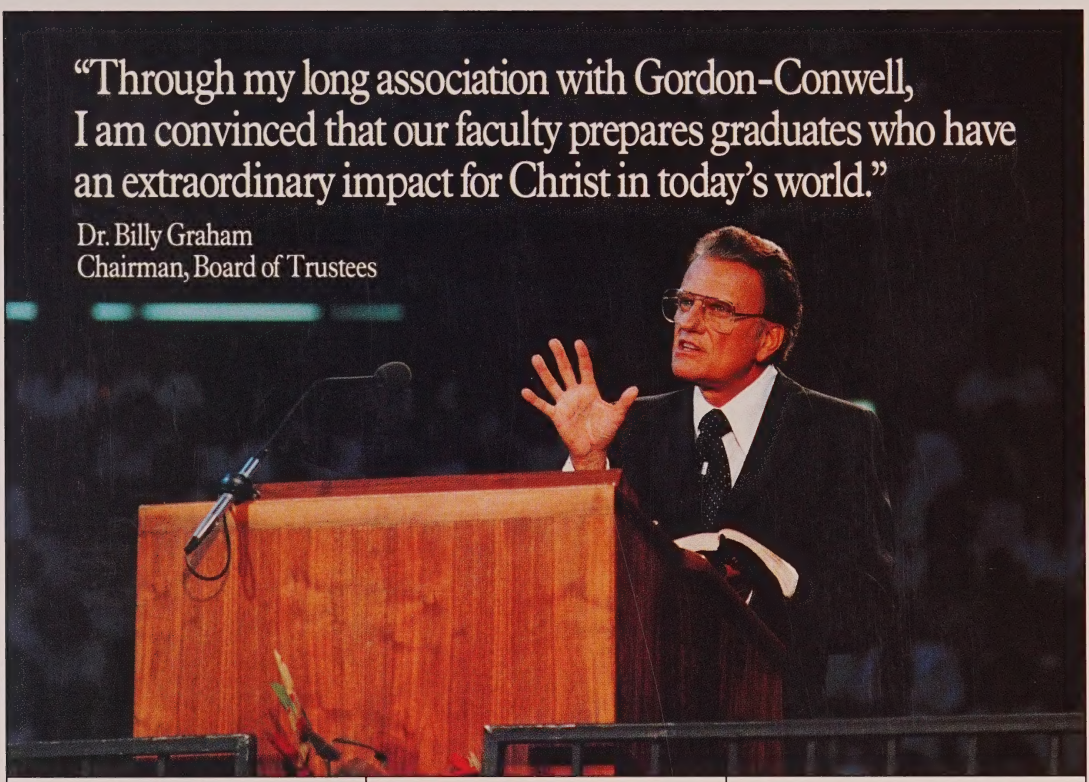

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CHURCH
of the Capital District

The Rev. Johannes W. Kuiper
Worship Coordinator

Every
Sunday
7:30 pm

Services at
275 State St.
Albany N.Y.

There is Good News indeed....

Stonewall Battle Song

for June 24, 1979

words and music
Larry Van Heusen

1. Long at the door in darkness we have tarried, hid from the light, our faces unknown. Long have our names in
2. Lord, make us free to care for one a-nother, though evil laws against us assail. Come, join the song, my

1. history been buried, yet the world can't leave us alone.
2. sister and my brother: Love shall triumph, evil shall fail.

Stand up, Stonewall, open the door; Amazon forward,

rise up and roar. Never shall the world hide truth anymore: We shall march together.

GAY UNITY DAY JUNE 17, 1979
ORDER FOR CELEBRATION 7:30 PM

Greeting and Announcements
Call to Worship
*SINGSPIRATION
"Battle Song for June 24, 1979" - L. Van Heusen
"Sweet, Sweet Spirit" - Purple No. 22
"Our God is Like An Eagle" - Purple No. 6

Confessional Rite
Prayer of Confession
Silent Confession
Words of Assurance
Summary of the Law
*Gloria : Glory be to the One God, and to the Christ and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end. Amen, amen!

SCRIPTURE LESSONS
O.T. Isaiah 40: 28-31
N.T. Revelation 21: 1-5a

*HYMN "The Voice of a Prophet" - Purple No. 50

SERMON- "A Past to Remember; A Future to Mold"
The Rev. Johannes W. "Jon" Kuiper, M.Div.

Service of Stewardship
The gathering of Tithes and Offerings
*Doxology: Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise to the Christ and in God grow;
Praise to the Holy Spirit give;
That we, in love, with God may live.
Amen
Prayer of Dedication

CELEBRATION of the Sacrament of Holy Communion

Prayers of Thanksgiving and the Prayer of Jesus
Our God who is in Heaven, Your name be Holy, Your Dominion come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Do not bring us to the test, but deliver us from evil. For the dominion, the power, and the glory are Yours, now and forever. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN "When We all Shall Walk Together" -Green No. 34

*THE BENEDICTION

Time for Fellowship and Refreshments

* * * * * * * * * * *

In the name of the Triune God, we welcome you to this service of worship at MCC Good News. We hope and pray that this time together will be richly blessed by our Heavenly Parent. Please sign our guest register so that we may remember and celebrate your presence in time to come.

We thank those who helped with the arrangements for our Rally and Parade. Let us not waste our efforts but thrust "gaily forward" in spreading the Good News of God's Love to all people.

Our special thanks to my Big Sister, the Rev. Marge Ragona of MCC Providence, Rhode Island, for sharing with us as our keynoter at the Rally.

And thanks to all of you, who over the past few months have challenged and inspired me into this ministry at MCC Good News. I continue to covet your prayers for my family as we still face an up-hill battle. But.....we have hope for we have faith in God. Can you say Amen! to that?

We rejoice in the fact that Marge Ragona is the celebrant during tonight's service. Marge will be leaving the East soon and move to California to minister there.

The Homosexual Experience: Rules, Roles and Relationships.

A series of 12 raps designed to explore what it means to be a gay person in today's world.

TOPICS:

9/28:	Coming Out
10/5 :	Who Do You Tell?
10/12:	The Gay Adolescent
10/19:	Monogamy vs. Open Relationships
10/26:	The Gay Parent
11/2 :	Making Relationships Last
11/9 :	Gay and Grey
11/16:	Fantasy, Fetishes and Fears
11/23:	(No meeting - Holiday weekend)
11/30:	Does Price/Pricess Perfect Really Exist?
12/7 :	Breaking Up is Hard to Do - Why?
12/14:	Bars/Baths/Bushes or is There Something More to Life?
12/21:	(No meeting - Holiday weekend)
12/28:	Everything You Wanted to Know But Were Afraid to Ask

The raps are open to anyone who wants to attend on any night you want to come. If there are too many in attendance for a good discussion, we may break into two groups on some nights.

This is a good way to explore your own feelings, attitudes and understandings, and to learn how others feel about the same things. All discussions are open and accepting. There are no "rights" and "wrongs". Your opinion is just as valid as anyone else's, and what you have to say just as important.

Raps meet Friday evening, 7:30 to 9:30 (Early enough so that you can still go out afterwards, if you want to -- or can join a group of us for a little bar ministry.)
Facilitators: David Holt & Dee Henning

All textbooks will be available through the church bookstore -- purchase limited to those attending the class (supplies are limited).

THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM
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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Under the Direction of
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Rev. Dennis Chappelle

Rev. J. A. Harvey - Pastor

ENROLLMENT
Sunday, September 23 and 30, 1979

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

Fall 1979

Classes

The Bible and Homosexuality
Conversational Prayer
Understanding the Old Testament

Rap
The Homosexual Experience:
Rules, Roles and Relationships

Metropolitan Community Church
of Los Angeles
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213-748-0121

FALL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Bible and Homosexuality

What does the Bible say about homosexuality?

Can one be both gay and a Christian?

What's the difference between today and the time when the Holiness Code was written, and why are the differences important to us?

What do the words in the Bible really mean, and does it matter whether they mean what the Church has tradionally taught or not?

What has the effect of traditional church teaching about homosexuality been on gay people's lives?

Want to find out more about this vitally interesting subject?

Attend our mini-course (6 weeks) and learn more about the Bible, yourself, and what the latest scholarship says on the subject.

Class meets Sunday morning, 9:15 - 10:15 in Friendship Hall (basement).

Informal class with rap session. (Limited to 20 to facilitate discussion)

Text: Homosexuality and the Bible; by Rev. Michael England, written for MCC - Washington, D.C.

Facilitators: Steve Wilkins
Robbie Hamilton

Conversational Prayer: Talking With God

If you attended Rosiland Rinker's workshop during General Conference, you were introduced to her ideas and thoughts about practical prayer and how to learn to be more open in your own prayer life.

For the purposes of this course you will be asked to keep a prayer journal and practice some of the prayer techniques of Rosiland Rinker.

Do you really feel you are communicating with God the way you want to?

Could your prayer life be more vital?

Can you draw closer to God and find the strength you so often need?

Can you share your joy with God?

Come and learn to pray -- come and let your spiritual life take wing!

(You will need to have a notebook in which to record your personal journey)

Class meets Sunday morning, 9:15 - 10:15 in the Deacon's Classroom.

Informal class with individual prayer journal keeping (on your own), and sharing prayer concerns.

Text: Conversational Prayer: Talking With God by Rosiland Rinker

Facilitators: Phil Harry
Darlene Smith

Understanding the Old Testament

Ever wanted to know more about the Bible, but were afraid to open it because you really didn't understand what it was all about -- particularly the Old Testament?

Want to meet some of the most interesting and unbelievable characters ever written about -- yet who really lived and left their mark on our faith -- and on our history?

Want to meet the God of history -- who interacted personally then as God does now -- and discover how our understanding of God has changed over the centuries?

Want to explore your faith and the Scripture that makes that faith richer, fuller, deeper?

Attend our introduction to the Old Testament -- and let yourself be intrigued by history, by the sweep of the Old Testament across that history, and by a larger view of God and your faith -- deeply rooted in those Scriptures!

Class meets Tuesday evening, 7:30-9:30 in the Deacon's Classroom.

Formal class with group discussion. Some outside reading is suggested, and a variety of materials will be distributed.

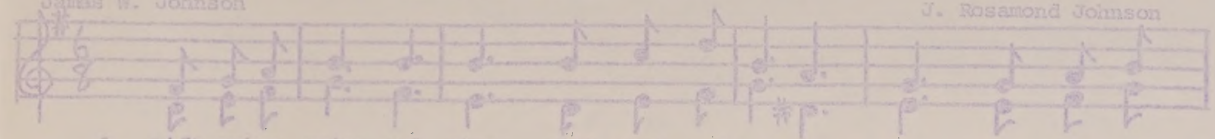
Text: The Book of the Acts of God
By: Albright and Mann (paperback)

Instructor: Rev. Marge Ragona

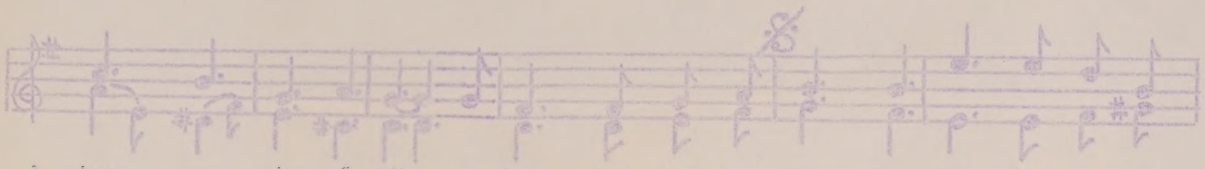
LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

James W. Johnson

J. Rosamond Johnson

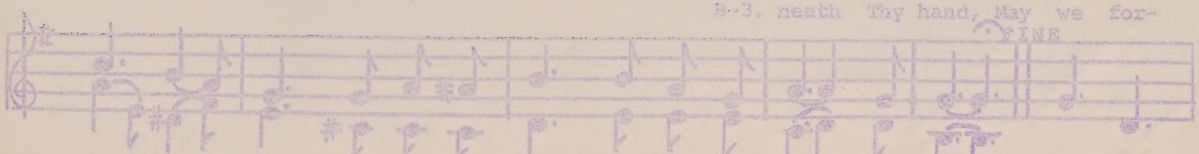


1. Lift ev'ry voice and sing, Till earth and heaven ring, Ring with the
2. Sto- ny the road we trod, Bit- ter the chast-'ning rod, Felt in the
3. God of our wea- ry years, God of our si- lent tears, Thou who hast

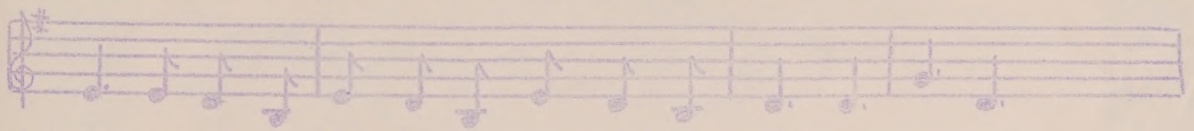


1. har- mo- nies of Lib - er- ty; Let our re- joic- ing rise High as the
2. days when hope un- born had died; Yet with a stead- y beat, Have not our
3. brought us thus far on the way; Thou who hast by Thy might, Led us in-
B-1. ris- ing sun of our new
B-2. gloom- y past, 'Til now we
B-3. neath Thy hand, May we for-

FINE

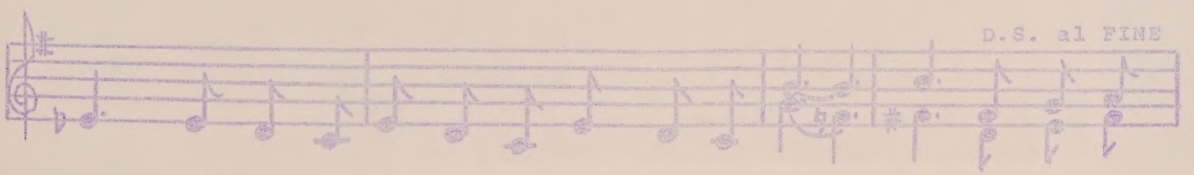


1. list- 'ning skies, Let it re- sound loud as the roll- ing sea. Sing a
2. wea- ry feet Come to the place for which our fa- thers sighed? We have
3. to the light, Keep us for- ev- er in the path, we pray. Lest our
B-1. day be- gun, Let us march on till vic-to- ry is won.
B-2. stand at last Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.
B-3. ev- er stand, True to our God, True to our Na- tive land.



1. song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us Sing a
2. come o- ver a way that with tears has been wa- tered We have
3. feet stray from the plac-es, our God, where we met Thee Lest our

D.S. al FINE



1. song full of the hope that the pres- ent has brought us; Fac- ing the
2. come, tread-ing our path thro' the blood of the slaugh- tered, Out from the
3. hearts; drunk with the wine of the world, we for- get Thee; Shad-owed be-

JESUS TAUGHT THAT YOU MATTER

TEACHER GUIDE

JESUS TAUGHT THAT YOU MATTER

TEACHER GUIDE

A FOUR-SESSION UNIT FOR USE WITH AGE 4

BY MARILYN F. INGALLS

PARISH LIFE PRESS
PHILADELPHIA

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"I Can Do It by Myself" 31

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About this unit

This is a very special unit to be used sometime after Christmas. It's for teachers who know their pupils well, who let them freely use interest centers, and who don't mind lots of preparation and messy activities.

By making church school so special for yourself, you are telling the children: You are special; you matter to me and to God.

And that's the direction of this unit:

To help the children—

- Feel that they matter to you;
- Develop good feelings about what they are able to do and what they are like as persons;
- Become acquainted with stories of Jesus' teaching about God's love and concern.

Biblical concepts

The biblical stories and concepts in this unit relate to God's concern for us always. Three stories about Jesus are used:

Session 1	Matthew 6:25-33	"And Jesus Taught Them . . ."
Session 2	Mark 4:1-2	"From a Boat"
Session 3	Mark 14:12-16; John 16:27	"God Loves You"

In Session 4 short contemporary stories highlight real-life ways grown-ups show Fours that they matter.

Something special

To help children know that they are special to you, add something to each child's area of interest. For example, you know that the family center is Rita's favorite so you add something special, a new dress for a doll or a new teapot for the stove. Or you may know that Tony loves to paint so you add a different-sized brush to use in the painting center.

The section, "Something Special for Someone Special," which follows the introduction, offers ideas for additions that will say to each child in the class, You are special.

You will actually plan for every child, using your experience and observations as a guide. In this unit you will be showing them that you recognize their individual differences and acknowledge that they matter.

By now you probably know the children's preferences. Write every child's name on a sheet of paper and list things that he or she likes to do in class and things that he or she is good at. Now decide what new equipment and materials you will add for each child. Your list might look something like this:

Child	*Likes/Does well*	*Will add*
Amy	Clay	To art center—rolling pin, cookie cutters
	Family play	To family center—new doll, dishpan, towels, water to give doll a bath
George	Dress-up	To family center—new hat, bow tie
	Painting	To art center—blue and yellow paint to let him discover how to make green

You may also want to make up a card for each child and write your observations about likes and dislikes so that you can make good choices for special additions during this unit and later ones.

Do not add more than one special item for each child at one time. More will be confusing. And don't be upset if children don't head right for the special things you've planned. Other children may be drawn to them. That's all right. Children's interests change, just as ours do.

Unit materials

For this unit you will need—

This teacher guide, one for each teacher;
Pupil book, one for each pupil;
Teaching Fours, a handbook for church school teachers;
Records for Fours (I), a set of records accompanying all weekly units for Fours;
Young Children Sing; and
Music Resource Book.
All items may be ordered from Fortress Church Supply Stores.

Session schedule

	Minutes for session		
	45	60	75
Time for Work	35	45	45
Time for Story and Worship	10	15	15
Time for Fun	—	—	15

Interest centers

This unit has ideas for using all of the usual interest centers—art, housekeeping, car/block, painting, music, nature, game, and woodworking. If your space is limited, have the art, family, and car/block centers, as well as the ones the children have enjoyed most in previous units.

You will not find a new idea for every center in every session. You will be designing much of the unit as you are guided by the children's preferences.

For help on setting up and using interest centers, see *Teaching Fours.*

Unit planning

Study this entire teacher guide before beginning to teach "Jesus Taught That You Matter." Decide which activities you will use. Scrounge and buy materials now.

Take a critical look at your classroom. You might put some old materials away and put out new ones or those that the children haven't used lately. If you're thinking about rearranging the room, let the children help during Session 1.

Look over the ideas in "Something Special for Someone Special." Decide what you will add for each child.

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Something special for someone special

When you add something special for each child, you are saying, I think you are special. I know what you like to do.

Here are some ideas:

Cars and blocks
Add small cars.

Make traffic signs from construction paper and staple them to toilet paper tubes.

Add people and animal figures. Cut people figures from magazines or catalogs and paste to small boxes. Try to get different kinds: farmer, nurse, minister, boys and girls, babies. For animals look in *Ranger Rick* or other nature magazines or use old picture books.

Lay out roads with masking tape where the children would like to have them.

Add blocks of unusual shapes. Cover different kinds of boxes and cans with attractive adhesive paper or paint.

Provide a shallow box full of dirt or sand. Use flower box, plastic cement mixing container, or small plastic swimming pool.

Add sturdy pieces of cardboard for ramps.

Books
Select books on favorite topics from the public library. Ask the children's librarian for suggestions.

Put out the children's old favorites.

Make simple books with the children's help. Fold sheets of paper for booklet and rip out magazine pictures for the children to cut and paste. Or let them draw pictures and then dictate a story for you to write.

Painting
Add different colors of paint and different sizes of brushes.

Cooking
The only hindrance to what you and the children cook is the length of time and number of teachers you have. Even the youngest child can make and share seemingly complicated recipes.

Woodworking
Add empty thread spools, different-sized nails, drill, screws, screwdrivers, paint, brushes, and a selection of soft wood from the scrap pile of a local lumber dealer. See Session 2 for details on woodworking center.

Water play
Add boats to sail, bubbles to blow, dolls and doll clothes to wash, wooden blocks and corks to float.

Have children help you clean a storage cabinet using warm soapy water.

Always have waterproof smocks to protect clothes and sponge or paper towels for spills.

Nature study
Add a magnifying glass, magnets, a prism, materials for planting seeds, or metal objects such as nails and screws.

Make sound cones. Fill small plastic medicine bottles with seeds, small pebbles, safety pins, salt, buttons. Make two of each kind. Have children find matching sounds.

Puzzles
Make your own new puzzles. Paste large magazine pictures to heavy cardboard and cut into eight or ten pieces with a jigsaw.

Clay
Add rolling pins and cookie cutters, or tempera paint and brushes for painting.

Family play
Add sponges, buckets, repair tools, dust cloths, telephone directory, play telephone, real kitchen utensils (sifter, egg beater, spatula, plastic bowls), empty food cartons, bow ties, hats, aprons.

Games
Make your own games. Get hints from toy and game catalogs.

Prop box
Add items related to familiar occupations: a hose for a firefighter, empty envelopes for a mail carrier, cash register for a store clerk.

For more ideas, reuse favorite activities from units you have taught earlier. Also, see *Teaching Fours* and any of the following resources:

Ways to Teach 3's to 5's by Carol J. Woodard (Philadelphia: Lutheran Church Press, 1965). See Chapter 2 for ideas for making furniture and Chapter 4 for recipes for art materials and new ideas for activities. May be available in church library.

Shopping Cart Art by James E. Seidelman and Grace Mintonye (New York: Macmillan, 1973) Collier paperback.

Bits and Pieces: Imaginative Uses for Children's Learning (Association for Childhood Education International). Paperback. Imaginative uses for scrap materials.

Building with Cardboard and *Building with Tubes* (Education Development Center). Paperback. Ways to make classroom furniture from free materials.

An Activities Handbook for Teachers of Young Children by Doreen J. Croft and Robert D. Hess (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972). Paperback. Many ideas, especially good for cooking activities.

Look in the public library and ask preschool teachers for these and other resources.

A new record of children's songs or stories is a nice surprise.

Children enjoy finding new things to explore in the nature center.

Session 1

The story, "And Jesus Taught Them . . ." emphasizes that Jesus taught about God's love and care for each of us. But you emphasize it even more by planning for each child during Time for Work. As you allow them to make choices, help make the room pleasant, and play with their friends, you show them that they matter to you. Through you they feel God's concern.

Preparation

Decide how you and the children will arrange and decorate the room. Gather materials and, if necessary, get permission to decorate window shades or put up curtains.

Add new materials for children to find in interest centers. See "Something Special for Someone Special."

Learn the story and new finger plays and songs.

As you plan, consider the length of the session, number of children and helpers, and the interests of each child. Substitute your own ideas for activities if they suit your circumstances better. Don't feel that you must do everything in the session plan. You may not have enough time or teachers to do some activities.

Time for work

Have something special for each child placed in interest centers. If a child does not play with the something special that you planned, don't be disappointed. The whole idea of interest centers is to allow children a free choice of activity. Another child's interest may be sparked by your special idea.

Change the room

Let the children help you rearrange the room. Clean and sort before the children arrive. Move what you can to one side or middle of the room or outside the room. When children come, tell them that they can help put their room back together the way they would like it to be.

If you have a large class, let small groups of three or four children work in the interest center of their choice. If you have a small group, have everyone work together. Let them decide how to arrange furniture in the centers. They will know they matter if they can make decisions about the room where they work and play.

Decorate windows

How you decorate windows, depends on the particular room situation. Choose a suggestion from below.

Shades. In the art center let the children decorate the shades with waterproof felt-tip markers. Check with your church council, property committee, or pastor for permission. Take the shades down and let the children work on them on the floor or a table covered with newspaper. Several children can work on one shade. Tell them that they can make their room prettier by drawing or putting designs on the shades. Let them pick their own colors and make their own drawings.

Curtains. Make simple curtains from plain sheets and let the children decorate them with waterproof felt-tip markers. Again, let them work on newspaper-covered floor or table. Check whether fire regulations require fireproofing the curtains before you do the project.

If you cannot hang curtains at the window, draw a fake window on heavy paper and tape it at child height on a wall or bulletin board in the family center. Nail a curtain rod or heavy wire to the wall at the top of the window and hang the curtains.

Stained-glass designs. At the art center supply wax paper, different colors of tissue paper, vegetable oil, and tissues. Cover a table with newspaper. Cut the wax paper twice the size of the window area each design will cover. Give each child a sheet of wax paper and have him or her fold it in half. Open the paper and pour a small amount of vegetable oil on the wax paper. Let the children use a crumpled tissue to spread the oil over the entire paper. Then have them choose tissue paper they want to use. Show them how to tear the paper into shapes and then arrange them on one half of the oiled wax paper. When they are finished, they should fold the other half of the wax paper over the design and press the two halves together until they stick. Some oil applied to the window will stick the stained-glass design to the window. Or punch a hole in the design and hang in front of window like a mobile. Have enough supplies so children may make a second one to take home. Tell parents how to stick the designs to a window with vegetable oil.

Have pictures taken

Take Polaroid pictures of children working in the interest centers. Be sure to include everyone. Photograph a variety of situations—working alone, working in groups, sharing, being a friend, helping someone else. Tape the pictures on colored construction paper or poster board and display it at the children's eye level in the book and story center.

As children look at pictures, you might comment, You were having fun playing with the cars, or, You and Jean helped each other with the puzzle.

Make a mobile

In the art center have 12-inch pieces of yarn of different colors, liquid laundry starch in a bowl, 12- by 12-inch pieces of cardboard, string, and a wire coat hanger. Cover the table with newspaper.

Give each child a piece of cardboard and let her or him pick out a piece of yarn. Tell the children to dip the whole piece of yarn into the starch and lay it on the cardboard and make a design. Some may wish to make a second one to take home. Put the pieces of cardboard on a radiator to dry the yarn faster. When dry, use strings of varying lengths to attach the stiff yarn designs to the coat hanger. You may have to wait until next session for this last step.

Try one yourself before the session and attach it to the coat hanger to give the children the idea of what they are doing. If you have not done this project before, testing it before use will help you feel more confident.

If you prefer, you might not make the mobile and allow the children to take home their individual designs on the cardboard.

Look at books

In the book and story center put out new books on children's favorite topics. Or bring out old favorites from earlier in the year. You might read a book to one or two children who are interested. You might comment, I knew you like books about animals, Jamie, so I got this one from the library for you.

Play in family center

To the family center add items that may spark new play for children who use this center frequently. See "Something Special for Someone Special."

As you see children playing with new things in the center, you might comment, You know how to use the egg beaters. You're growing up.

Play with blocks and cars
For children who use the car/block center frequently, add something special. See "Something Special for Someone Special."

Time for story and worship

Follow your usual clean-up procedure. As children finish cleaning up, have them go to your usual gathering place where a teacher is ready to begin group activities.

Do a finger play
As the children join the group, do a familiar finger play while waiting for the others. Or learn a new one such as "A Nest for Mr. Robin":

Here is a nest for Mr. Robin. *(Cup hand.)*
Here is a hive for Mr. Bee. *(Hold up curved hands, with palms facing each other.)*
Here is a hole for Mr. Rabbit. *(Loose fist showing hole.)*
And here's a house for me. *(Hands over head, fingertips touching, to suggest roof.)*

(*MRB*, p. 79)

If some of the children prefer to work quietly in an interest center, let them. They will hear what is happening even if they don't join the group. If everyone or many are working at a table doing puzzles or drawing quietly, take the story to them. Let them work while you talk.

Sing
If the children have a favorite song, sing it. Then teach a new song, "When Jesus Taught the People," which is on *Records for Fours* (I) and in the back of this guide.

Even if you don't have accompaniment, go ahead and sing. The important thing is to enjoy the music and the children will join the fun.

Hear a story
Tell the children, Jesus lived a long, long time ago. He went to many places and told people about God. He told them that God loved and cared for them.

Show them the cover of the pupil book. Read the title. Then read the story "And Jesus Taught Them. . . ." Be sure to hold the book so the children can see the pictures.

Look at the Bible
If you have a worship table, display a Bible and perhaps a birds' nest or flowers or the children's artwork.

Show the children the Bible and tell them, The story I just read is in the Bible, too. The Bible has many stories about Jesus and what he told people about God.

Pray
Thank you, God for loving and caring for us and for the trees and plants and animals and birds. Amen.

Sing again
Sing "When Jesus Taught the People" again. If the children enjoy singing, try "For Bunnies and Squirrels" (*Young Children Sing,* p. 182) or "Playing" (*Music Resource Book,* p. 34).

Time for fun
If your session runs longer than an hour, choose an extra activity.

Play a favorite game
Play a game that the children have enjoyed before. Let them suggest games.

Play "Duck, Duck, Goose"
To play "Duck, Duck, Goose," have the children sit in a circle on the floor. One child is the goose and walks around the outside of the circle lightly touching each child on the head, saying "Duck" until he or she chooses the goose. As he touches the goose he says, "Goose." That child gets up and chases the first child around the circle. The first child sits where the new goose had been sitting.

Play "Two Little Robins"
Have the children sit in a circle. Choose a Jack and Jill to sit in the center. Jack and Jill follow the actions of the verse as the class says:

> Two little robins sitting on a hill,
> One named Jack, the other named Jill.
> Fly away Jack, fly away Jill. *(They fly away.)*
> Come back Jack, come back Jill. *(They both come back.)*
> Two little robins sitting on a hill.
>
> (*MRB,* p. 79)

Then Jack and Jill choose another Jack and Jill until everyone who wishes has had a turn. You may need to suggest that they choose those who have not yet had a turn.

Session 2

Jesus taught about God in many places. The story "From a Boat" is about Jesus teaching a large crowd from a boat pushed away from the shore (Mark 4:1-2). Several boat activities are suggested for Time for Work not only because of the connection with the story but also because of the fun children will have. These activities tell the children that they matter to you.

The special things you add to the interest centers also demonstrate that you care for them. And the variety of activities allows the children to make use of their individual special skills and to feel good about what they can do.

Preparation

Collect the materials you will need for this session. Decide whether to add woodworking or water play. Both are too much. If you have a woodworking center, recruit a parent, teen-ager, or other interested church member to supervise the children in that center. Add to interest centers anything that is inspired by the children's likes and interests. See "Something Special for Someone Special."

If you are a substitute teacher or did not teach Session 1 of this unit, read Session 1, scan the rest of the unit materials, and talk to the person who taught the first session.

Time for work

Let the children move freely from activity to activity and from center to center. Use the interest centers mentioned in this guide and any others that the children enjoy.

Color boxes

In the art center provide several large cardboard boxes and felt-tip markers (with washable ink). Let the children turn the boxes into whatever they wish —boat, train, bus, rocket ship, or even a gasoline pump. When they have decided what the boxes will be, let them use the markers to color them. Two or three children might work together or one child may work on a box.

Make boats

In the art center the children might make small boats for floating. You will need walnut halves, small nails with heads, paper for sails, scissors, and non-water-soluble glue such as Elmer's Glue-All. Let the children cut out sails for their own boats and stick them on the nails. Don't expect precision. Drop glue inside the walnut shell and glue the head of the nail.

Or use Ivory soap or rectangles of Styrofoam. Stick the paper sail on a nail if used with soap or on a round toothpick with Styrofoam. Children may need help in pushing the nail point down into the soap.

Or use pea pods, toothpicks, and paper sails. Insert the toothpick through the paper sail cut by the children and then push the toothpick into the pea pod.

Any of these boats can be sailed in a pan of water.

Use hammer and saw

In the woodworking center provide real hammers and saws, sandpaper, flat pieces of soft wood (for example, pine and fiberboard), and long nails with big heads. Use a child's workbench or an overturned sturdy wooden crate. Have one person constantly supervise this center and show the children how to use the tools properly. Be sure that person understands that what the children produce is not as important as the experience and fun of hammering and sawing.

You will need some simple rules for this center. The children can help to make them. Ask, How do we use the hammer and saw so that no one will get hurt? Where do we put the saw when we are

finished? Where do we use the saw and hammer?

Give everyone a chance to use the tools. All centers are for all children—boys and girls alike.

This session some may want to make a boat by hammering a long nail into a flat piece of wood. Then let them fasten a paper sail to the nail. These boats can be floated in a pan of water.

As children work with the tools, you might say, That's a good boat you made. You know how to make things with wood.

You are helping the children feel good about their four-year-old skills.

Play in water

In a quiet corner let the children enjoy water play. Let them help you cover the floor with a plastic cloth or old shower curtain. Partially fill a baby's wash basin, dishpan, plastic swimming pool, or large plastic cement mixing container with water. Have the children wear water smocks (plastic aprons or plastic trash bags with holes cut out for head and arms). Provide boats children made or small plastic boats, containers for pouring and filling, and things that float.

Limit the number who can play at once to two, three, or four, depending on the available space. The children can help make rules if you ask, How can we keep the water off the floor and off each other? How can we be sure everyone has a chance to play?

Supervise water play until you are sure children can play alone.

Paint

To set up a painting center, use easels, a table, or the floor. Let the children help you to cover the floor or table with newspaper. Use newsprint or paint paper about 18 by 24 inches, long-handled flat brushes, and two or three colors of paint.

Make paint by mixing liquid or powdered tempera paint with liquid laundry starch. Store in screw-top baby food jars.

If the children have not used the painting center before, show them how to wipe excess paint off the brush before removing it from the jar.

You might observe as the children paint, You're having fun with the paints. What pretty colors!

Play quietly

In the art center and game center provide for familiar quiet activities such as crayoning pictures, stringing beads, and putting together puzzles.

Pretend with blocks

In the car/block center children may pick up the boat idea and build boats with the blocks. Some may have other ideas.

Time for story and worship

Warn children a few minutes before cleanup so that they can finish what they are doing. At cleanup try to get everyone to help.

Pretend to be seeds

Do a familiar finger play. If you are using this unit in the spring, tell the children they are seeds planted in the dirt. Have them stoop to the floor. Then say this rhyme:

Sleep, sleep, sleep, little seed, *(shut eyes).*
Sleep through the winter long.
Wake, wake, wake in the spring *(stretch and slowly stand up).*
Wake with the bluebird's song.

"Sleep, Little Seed" by Louise M. Oglevee is reprinted by permission of the United Chuch Press from *Song and Play for Children,* copyright 1925 and 1953 by The Pilgrim Press.

Sing
To introduce the story, sing "When Jesus Taught the People."

Hear a story
Tell the children, Sometimes Jesus taught from a boat. That's what our story for today is about.

Then tell the story "From a Boat," which is in the pupil storybook.

Pray
Thank you, God, for Jesus who taught about you. Thank you for mother and father and teachers who tell us about you. Amen.

Talk about boats
Ask the children if any of them have been on a boat. Let them tell about their experiences. If any made boats during Time for Work, talk about that, too.

Learn a new song
Teach the children "You Are Special," which is on *Records for Fours* (I) and in the back of this guide.

Talk about next time
Tell the children that next time you will be cooking something. Give them two choices. You might ask, Would you like to make muffins or would you like to make cookies? Decide ahead of time what choices you will offer.

Time for fun
If your session runs longer than an hour, play games that use four-year-olds' abilities. Have two or three games going at once, and let the children choose which they want to play.

Play picture lotto
To make a lotto game, use two copies of the same catalog or magazine. Cut out identical pictures. Make lotto cards by dividing 9- by 12-inch or similar-sized pieces of construction paper or poster board into six sections. Paste a picture in each section. Then cut out six individual cards the same size as the card sections and paste the matching pictures on them. Make three or four sets.

Give each child a lotto card. Mix up the individual cards face down on a table or the floor. Let the children take turns picking up one card at a time. The child with the matching picture gets to put the card on top of it. First child to get all six cards on a lotto card wins.

Play a matching card game
To play this game use the ones, twos, threes, fours, and fives of a regular deck of playing cards or use part of a children's card game. Or make your own set of cards using five sets of four identical pictures or stickers pasted on 3- by 5-inch cards.

Put one of each kind or number face up on the floor or table. Deal the rest of the cards to the children who are playing. Ask, Who has a one (or a cow or a star or whatever)? If you have a one, put it on top of the one on the table. Continue the game until all the cards are matched.

Play "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"
To play this game, sit in a circle on the floor and hold hands. This is one big boat. As you sing the words to "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" (*MRB*, p. 28), everyone pretends to row the boat. Add another verse: "Rock, rock, rock your boat" and rock back and forth.

Time to leave
As the children leave, tell them you had fun today and that you will see them next session.

Session 3

Jesus taught that God loves us. The story "God Loves You" is about Jesus' eating the Passover meal with his disciples and telling them of God's love for them. As the children participate in activities during Time for Work, they will feel God's love for them through your planning and care for them.

Preparation

Read this session and gather whatever materials you will need. If you have not taught the first two sessions of this unit, read Session 1 and scan the rest of the unit.

Prepare notes to be taken home at the end of this session to tell parents to dress the children for the messy activities next session.

Check about using the kitchen for cooking this session.

Do you want to add anything for someone special this session? See "Something Special for Someone Special."

Time for work

Some children may not want to be involved with your special plans for this session. That's all right. Let them use the interest centers as they wish.

Make play food

In the art center provide magazine pictures of food and pictures from food packages, cardboard found in hosiery and similar packaging, paste, and scissors. Put paste in jar tops for two or three children to share. Children may pick out pictures and paste them on cardboard. You may have to show some how to paste. Explain that the paste makes the picture stick to the paper and show them how to apply the paste to the back of the picture. When pictures are pasted, let them cut out the pictures. If the children don't have good scissors, you may have to cut them out for them.

When the pretend food is complete, let the children take it to the family center and store it in the refrigerator or a cupboard.

Make a collage

While the paste and scissors are out, some may want to make a collage picture. In the art center have paste; scissors; construction paper; and a box of odds and ends of ribbon and lace, scraps of wrapping paper, straws, cotton, and bits of fabric. Let the children paste items to a sheet of construction paper.

You might comment, Look at all the colors! or, You know how to use glue now.

Listen to music

In the music center have a simple single-knob record player, records, scarves, tutus, and rhythm instruments. Children may just listen or may dance or may use the instruments. You might play the march on *Records for Fours* (I) and let them march around the music center.

As children dance or march, you might ask, Do you like to do this? Some may tell you more about what they enjoy doing.

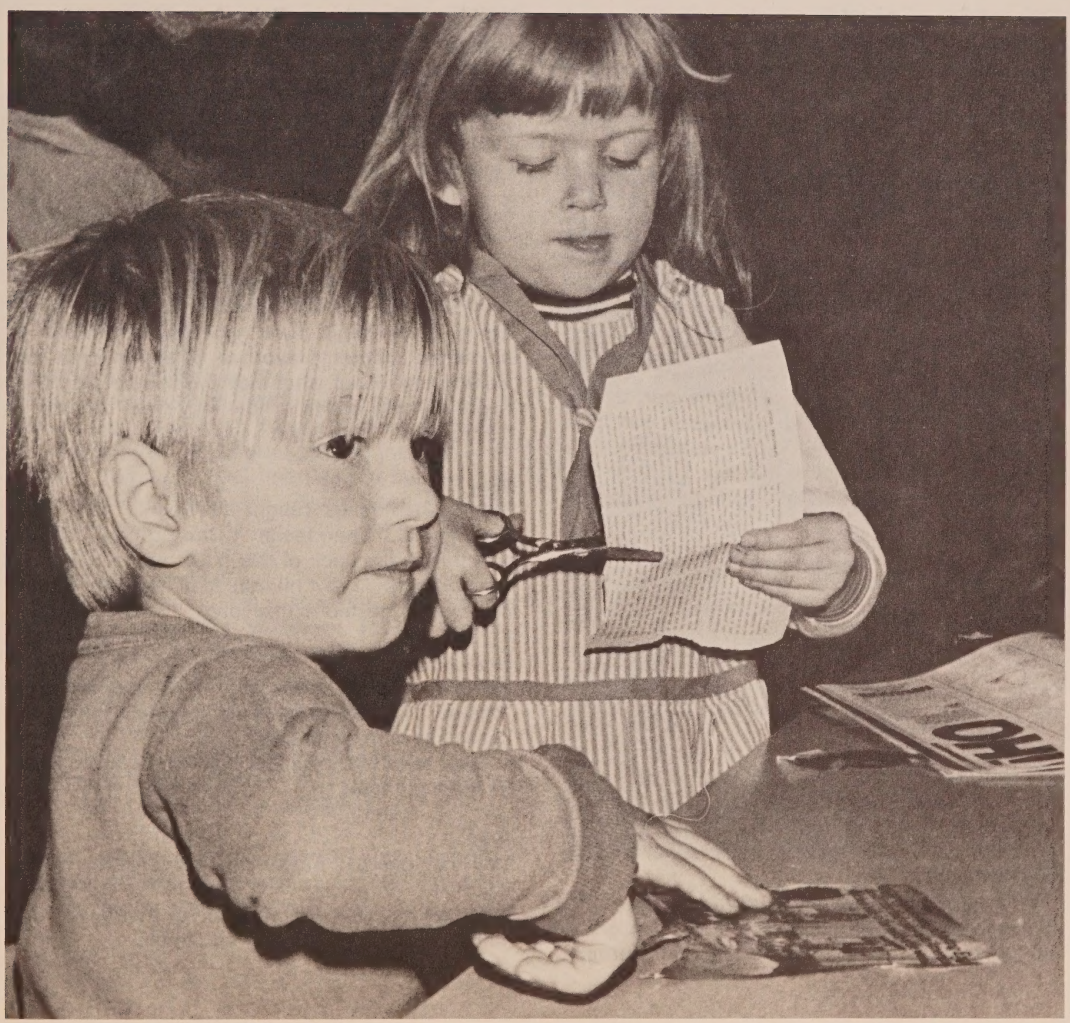
Play store

In the family center add a few paper bags. Children may want to play store with the new food made in the art center.

Make a snack

In a quiet area prepare the food that the class decided to make during Session 2. Put all ingredients on a child-height table.

Start this activity soon after children arrive so that you will have enough time for cooking and eating.



Have interested children make a circle around the table. Let everyone take a turn, going around the circle. Children can help measure and put ingredients in the bowl, stir five or ten times, and put dough in muffin tins or flatten the cookies.

Here are two recipes. You, of course, may want to use your own recipes for these or other foods. Increase or decrease recipes for the size of your class. Test recipes before using.

Muffins

Heat oven to 400°. Grease 12 medium-sized muffin cups.

Beat slightly with fork *1 egg*. Stir in *1 cup milk, ¼ cup cooking oil* or melted shortening. Sift together *2 cups sifted flour, ¼ cup sugar, 3 teaspoons baking powder,* and *1 teaspoon salt*. Stir into milk mixture just until flour is moistened. Batter will be lumpy. Try not to overmix.

Fill muffin cups ⅔ full. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown.

In addition to italicized ingredients you will need muffin cups or tins, shortening, two bowls, flour sifter, measuring cups and spoons, hot pads.

Muffins may also be baked at 400° in a covered electric skillet. Set the muffin cups on a rack inside the skillet.

Sugar Cookies

Heat oven to 400°.

Blend together *½ cup shortening, ½ teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind,* and *1 cup sugar*. Beat *1 egg* and *2 tablespoons milk*. Stir in *2 cups sifted flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, ½ teaspoon soda.*

Drop rounded teaspoonsful of mixture on lightly greased baking sheet. Grease bottom of a glass. Dip glass in sugar and flatten each cookie. Sprinkle cookies with *nutmeg*. Bake 8 to 10 minutes until light golden. Cool on a rack. Makes 3 dozen cookies.

In addition to italicized materials you will need cookie sheets, shortening, a glass, spatula, egg beater, flour sifter, measuring spoons and cups, teaspoons, bowl, rack.

(Muffin and sugar cookie recipes courtesy of *Betty Crocker's Cook Book for Boys and Girls* © 1957, General Mills, Inc.)

Time for story and worship

As the children finish cleaning up and join the group, do the finger play "A Nest for Mr. Robin" or any of the children's favorites. Or the children may want to talk about what they did this session. You might ask the children how they help to cook at home.

Sing

Sing "When Jesus Taught the People" and "You Are Special." Then teach "I Can Do It by Myself," which is in the back of this guide and on *Records for Fours* (I). The children may want to do the motions suggested in this song.

Hear a story

Tell the children, Jesus and his friends often ate together. This story is about a special meal that Jesus had with his friends.

Then read the story "God Loves You," which is in the pupil book.

Pray

You may use this prayer now or as grace for the snack:

Thank you, God, for food and for friends to share with. Thank you for loving us. Amen.

Eat a snack
Have the children gather around a table. Someone can pass the cups, someone else the napkins, someone else the cookies or muffins. If you use a small unbreakable pitcher, a child can pour juice or milk into the cups.

As children eat, let them talk and enjoy each other's company. Do not feel you must lead a conversation.

Time for fun
Play a game that the children suggest or try one of the following.

Guess what's in the bag
Fill a paper bag with familiar objects such as a crayon, a small block, a rubber band, a band-aid. Let the children take turns putting their hand in the bag. Tell them, Feel one thing in the bag and guess what it is. Then take it out and show it to the rest of the class.

Play "Skipping Is Fun"
Have children stand in a wide circle. Chant these words and follow the directions. Have everyone going in the same direction.

> Skipping is fun, skipping is fun!
> Skipping is fun for everyone.
> The more you skip, the more you can,
> So skip! skip! skip!
>
> (*MRB*, p. 48)

Then let the children suggest other activities they can do such as hopping, jumping, and walking. Substitute these words for *skipping* in the poem.

Time to leave
As the children leave today, be sure to give them the notes to parents about the messy activities next session. Also print children's names on the pupil books to be taken home today.

Session 4

Jesus taught that God loves us. The story for this session deals with real ways that children are loved and cared for. You tell the children in your class that you love and care for them as you let them do messy activities that take extra time and patience. And as you let them experiment with new materials, they discover skills and can feel good about their abilities.

Preparation
Depending on space and adult help, choose only one or two messy activities. Constant adult supervision is a must.

Gather materials and dress appropriately. Be prepared to relax and enjoy this session.

If there is no sink in the classroom, have a bucket of warm soapy water and paper towels for cleaning messy hands. Also, be sure you have enough smocks for dressed-up children.

Practice telling the stories for Time for Story and Worship.

Time for work

Some children do not like to do messy activities. Don't force them. They can work at other activities.

Make play dough
Children can take turns measuring and mixing play dough with close adult supervision. In the art center have a bowl, measuring cup, salt, flour, food coloring, vegetable oil, and a plastic bag for storage.

Measure into bowl 2 cups of flour, 1 cup of salt. Slowly add about ½ cup of water and knead until mixture is smooth and easy to handle. If you wish, add a few drops of food coloring to the water before mixing with dry ingredients. To make the dough more pliable, add a little vegetable oil.

Let the children use the play dough. If you want to save it for another time, put it into a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator.

As the children mix the dough, you might comment, You can measure and mix. You are growing up. God planned it that way.

Finger paint
In the art center let the children finger paint. You will need smocks, newspaper, sheets of glossy shelf paper, commercial finger paint or liquid laundry starch, powdered or liquid tempera paint, and dish detergent.

Have every child who wants to finger paint to put on a smock. Let the children help to spread newspaper on a table or on the floor where they will paint. Wet the glossy side of the shelf paper with a sponge or dip the whole paper into a basin of water.

Have three or four colors of paint for the children to choose from. Put a dab on each paper and let them go to work. To make your own paint, put a small amount of liquid laundry starch on the paper, then a dab of liquid or powdered tempera paint and let the children mix it themselves. Two parts starch to one part paint works well. For easy cleanup add a small amount of liquid dish detergent to the recipe.

Show children who have never finger painted how to use their fingers and hands to swirl the paint. Let them experiment. Some even use their forearms so be sure sleeves are rolled up.

As children work, you might comment, What pretty colors, Janet. Or, Look at your swirls, Joe. They are nice! You are letting them know that they are special and each has skills.

Spread newspaper in an unused corner of the floor and dry wet paintings there. Or use a wooden clothes drying rack.

Play in dirt
In a quiet corner let the children play in dirt or sand. Put newspapers or plastic covering on the floor. Use a small plastic swimming pool, a large cardboard box with sides cut to 6 inches tall, or a plastic container for mixing cement for the dirt and provide small cars, dishes, and spoons for digging. Children sit around the box and play. Help them make rules by asking, How can we keep dirt off the floor and off us? How can we be sure everyone who wants to gets to play? Limit the number of children to play in the dirt at one time.

Wash dolls and doll clothes
In the family center provide water smocks, towels, sponges, a dishpan or baby basin partially full of warm sudsy water, and a clothes rack. The children may want to wash dolls, doll clothes, and dishes. If water is spilled, let the children clean it up with a sponge. Limit the number who play in the water at one time. Again help the children make rules.

Paint with bleach
In the art center provide small jars of laundry bleach and water solution, cotton swabs, and colored tissue paper or construction paper. The children paint with the swabs after dipping them into the bleach solution. The results are surprising.

To protect clothes, have the children wear smocks. If you use this activity have adequate supervision. Caution the children that they are to use the swab on the paper, not on themselves. Be sure they understand that this isn't water.

Time for story and worship

As children gather, you might talk about what they did this session. You might ask them to bring their finger paintings or bleach paintings and hang them at the worship center. You might comment, I knew that you liked to paint so I got the paints out today. Or, that was a hard puzzle to put together, but you did it. Let the children know that you like each of them and that you know about their individual likes.

Sing

Sing "I Can Do It by Myself" and "You Are Special." Also let the children suggest songs.

Hear a story

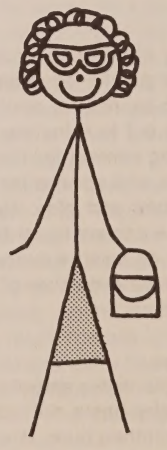
Tell the children, We like you and we care about you. God loves you and cares for you, too. I'm going to tell you stories about ways we show we like you.

Before the session think of incidents in which you showed concern for individual children. Then make up stick figure stories that you can tell at a chalkboard or on a large sheet of newsprint using felt-tip markers. Use real names. Don't worry about your drawing abilities. Four-year-olds are not that critical. Keep the drawings simple and uncluttered.

Here are samples. If you prefer, use these stories instead of your own.

One Sunday Mrs. Griggs *(draw woman stick figure)* saw that Connie *(draw smaller stick figure)* liked to dress up. So the next Sunday Mrs. Griggs brought an old skirt *(draw skirt)* and a big purse *(draw purse)* and some old glasses *(draw pair of glasses).* Connie put on the skirt *(draw skirt on stick figure)*; she put on the glasses *(draw glasses on the figure)*; she carried the big purse *(draw purse at figure's hand).* And did she ever have fun. Mrs. Griggs was glad that Connie had fun at church school.

Figures for the Connie story might look like this.



Connie after she dresses up.

It was Jimmy's first day at church school *(draw stick figure).* For a while he had fun playing with the blocks *(draw some blocks).* Then he began to miss his mother and father and he began to cry *(draw tears on Jimmy's face).* Mr. Jones *(draw stick figure)* saw Jimmy crying and put his arm around Jimmy *(draw arm around Jimmy's figure).* Jimmy felt better *(erase tears).* "Your mother will be here soon," said Mr. Jones. "Let's find a book and we'll read it together." And Mr. Jones and Jimmy read a book *(draw a book between the two figures),* and Jimmy felt much better. He knew that Mr. Jones liked him *(draw smile on Jimmy's face).*

Pray
Thank you, God, for people who like us and take care of us. Amen.

Say something nice
Tell the children, I had fun today. Then comment on something special about each child, for example: Jimmy makes such big buildings with blocks. Joan likes to play with puzzles. Allen knows how to wash the dolls. Ann likes to hammer nails.

Look at each child as you mention him or her by name.

Time for fun

Plant flowers
If children played with dirt today, get rid of the dirt by planting quick-growing seeds such as marigolds or pumpkins. You will need seeds, spoons, containers, and water. Use a flower box if the plants are to stay in school or paper cups if they will go home.

Let the children fill the containers with dirt. Make a hole for a seed or two. Cover the seeds and water.

Make up stories
If the children enjoyed the stick figure stories during Time for Story and Worship, let them make up a story for you to draw as they tell. Keep the figures simple even if the plot gets complicated.

Play a game
Let the children suggest a favorite game to play or choose one that you know the children like.

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Songs

When Jesus Taught the People

GERMAN FOLK SONG

ARR. BY R. HAROLD TERRY

D A D A7 D

1. When Je - sus taught the peo - ple, He told them God is lov - ing.
2. When Je - sus taught the peo - ple, He talked a - bout the flow - ers.
3. When Je - sus taught the peo - ple, He told them man - y sto - ries.

JACK M. AVERILL, ALT.

You Are Special

MY HAT

ARR. BY R. HAROLD TERRY

C G G C

1. You, my friend are spe-cial. There's no one just like you.
2. Li - sa, you are spe-cial. There's no one just like you.

C G G C

God has made you spe-cial. There's no one just like you.
Li - sa you are spe-cial. There's no one just like you.

JACK M. AVERILL

I Can Do It by Myself

TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR

ARR. BY R. HAROLD TERRY

C F C Dm C G C

1. I can hang up all my clothes,
2. I can dry the spoons and forks, I can do it by my - self.
3. I can paint and cut and paste,

C F C Dm C F G C

4. I can do it by my - self, Thank you, thank you, thank you, God.

DORIS J. WIENCKE

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Materials for this unit: Teacher Guide (16-5017); Pupil Book entitled *Jesus Taught About God* (16-5016)

Parish Life Resources
Weekly Class Unit
Age 4

16-5017